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THE

DENOUNCED.

BY THE

AUTHORS OF "TALES BY THE O'HARA FAMILY.

——— bright o'er the flood
Of her tears and her blood,
Let the rainbow of hope be her Wellington's name.
THOMAS MOORE.

J. Banim.

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VOL. I.

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1830.

TO THE READER.

Some old laws, and, fashioned by them, history and tradition, gave hints for the following tales; and those hints were taken up in the spirit of mere story-telling: that is, as keys to feeling and passion, in certain states of excitement.

For the sake of the plausible, however, it was foreseen to be necessary that allusions should be made to the old laws themselves. Hence arose a consideration, how far such allusions might affect, without the will or seeking of the writers, a question *at that time debated*: and it seemed certain, according to the opinions of competent friends, that if no prejudice interfered with the indispensable task, harm could scarce be done.

Accordingly our tales were begun; and they had drawn to a close, when the question alluded to *became unexpectedly decided.*

As regarded the point first mooted, we could now do neither good nor harm. A new apprehension troubled us, however. It would not be difficult, we thought, in the changed aspect of affairs, to apply to the allusions spoken of as necessarily existing in our pages, such criticism as—"continuing prejudices," "opening wounds afresh," &c.

We answer by anticipation, that if we believed these tales calculated to wound a single generous feeling, or to fix a single prejudice, we would destroy them, rather than publish them. To guard against any such chance after the late great decision, we carefully and anxiously reviewed them, —in fact, rewrote them, (and therefore they come tardily before the public.) Supposing our endeavours not to have proved literally successful, let the will be taken for the deed, and let our good friend (imagined) only point out a

passage hostile to peace among all men, and that passage shall be expunged.

But assuredly we fight with a shadow indeed. It is not in the present day, when the musty folios of penal enactment have become so much lumber, that the honest tale-writer is to be forbidden such introduction as they can give him to the fortunes and manners, the hearts and the firesides of a hundred and thirty years ago.

If, however, our stories are to be read with any feeling except that of reading a story, such feeling, in the breast of The Lately-Made-Free, will surely amount to no more than gratitude to God and to Man for his escape from the shackles worn by his forefathers; and in the breast of the reader who still honestly disapproves of the slave's enfranchisement, perhaps a glance over the old rusty chain of legal disability, may help to banish even his regret that he has lived to see broken its last festering link.

THE

LAST BARON OF CRANA.

CHAPTER I.

THE battle of Aughram had been proceeding from daybreak till six o'clock, and was still undecided, although victory seemed wavering to the side of the unhappy Stuart. His French commander-in-chief, the brave and experienced, though conceited, St. Rothe, with a force much inferior in discipline to that which he opposed, had repulsed the whole day the charges of Ginkle's veteran army, made up of troops of many warlike nations. St. Rothe's excellent position greatly assisted the desperate courage of his native Irish soldiers.

In his front, which fully occupied an unequal and broken hill, stretched a bog, scarce passable: his right was strongly entrenched; his left rested on the castle of Aughram. The cavalry of William repeatedly failed in their attempts to force either of the two last-mentioned points; and his infantry were equally successful in trying to shake the former.

As twilight drew on, Ginkle prepared to pause or to retire; but a second and more fortunate thought prompted him to order a fresh assault, covered and supported by field-pieces, upon the Irish right. His historians say, that "it was not without the most surprising efforts of courage and perseverance they at length obliged the enemy to give ground, who, even then, lost it by inches." St. Rothe detached succours from his centre and his left to assist the disputed point. His antagonist, observing this movement, ordered the positions so weakened to be also attacked, and again the battle became general.

While the discharges of artillery shrouded the combatants at the wing which it was brought to attack, Dutch, English, Danish, and French Huguenot cavalry were seen, at full gallop skirting the edge of the bog, to charge the left of the opposite army; and long lines of infantry, broken and straggling, and wading breast-high through water and mud, appeared, making slow and toilsome way over the morass, bent upon a final and desperate onset on St. Rothe's centre. These last continued distinctly visible until they gained the base of the confronting eminence; for, owing to the difficulties and labour of their progress, no smoke from their own firelocks enveloped them. But the enemy they struggled to reach did not remain so exposed to view. Almost without a chance of retaliation, they discharged well-aimed volleys at their brave enemies, of which the thick white smoke soon hid their whole body; and the fierce flash, flash, unceasingly darting out of the opaque vapour, and the frequent breaks thereby occasioned in the tortuous line of the assaulters, alone told, like thousands of fiery tongues, that death dwelt within the cloud which sat on Kircommadon-hill.

It was now indeed a scene of quick and sharp action, and of panting interest; and the dulled sun seemed fitly preparing to sink behind Aughram castle, amid black wreaths of vapour, which waited to eclipse him, as the the issue of the struggle he overlooked was doomed to obscure the fortunes of one or the other of the princes in whose names arose the shouts of onslaught.

It has not been intended to attempt a full or detailed picture of the celebrated battle of Aughram. Allusion is made to it only for the purpose of distinguishing among the *melée*, at a particular moment, two rival combatants; and the reader now arrives, by this hasty and partial sketch, at the point of time required.

The attack of Ginkle's cavalry upon the Irish left had failed. The infantry sent through the bog effected, notwithstanding the accumulated impediments of their way, a landing at the base of Kircommadon-hill, and charged up to St. Rothe's centre. The rugged eminence was crossed with hedges and ditches, occupied by musketry, and they were quickly driven back, however, dispirited, and at a great loss. The Irish pursued them half-way across the morass, and, better acquainted with the difficulties of the ground, continued to inconvenience them. Shouts of triumph arose over the hill; and while Ginkle's army remained silent, St. Rothe seemed preparing,

by a general movement, to, as he vauntingly expressed it, "drive the English to the gates of Dublin."

The affair in the morass became a mere scramble; man encountering man, and almost by strength of hand alone, deciding each other's fate. Indeed, few but the officers of either side could set their chance of life and death upon a more warlike struggle; they, however, still able to use a sword above their heads, although sunk in mud and water, often met in gallant encounter. From among others are selected an officer of one of Sarsfield's regiments, on the Irish side, and an officer of the Enniskilleners, on the English side. The former was a man of advanced age; the latter some ten years younger. When they singled each other out in the middle of the bog, these antagonists had just partially extricated themselves from deep immersion in a pool, and stood, front to front, foot to foot, eye to eye, point to point, upon the only comparatively firm patch of soil within some distance. Uttering no language save that conveyed in the mutual flashing of their eyes, their swords instantly crossed and clattered. After a few parries, the Enniskillener, by an oblique up-cut, struck off the Jacobite's perforated iron cap, or "pott," and quickly following up his success, slightly wounded him through the folding skirt of his highly-wrought buff coat, in the right thigh. This fired as well as made free with the Milesian's blood, and furiously closing with his enemy, he struck the sword from his hand, and pushed him on his knees. "Rescue or no, my prisoner!" then cried the victor.

"Quarter or no quarter, still your mortal foe!" answered the half-prostrate man.

"Say not the words again," resumed the Irish officer, raising his sword: "the times seldom afford the choice I tender you; besides, look over the bog—the day is ours."

"It shall never be yours, slavish Papist!" persisted the vanquished Enniskillener.

"Nor yours, then, false traitor!" retorted the other, and he drew back his arm to prepare it for a thrust. Meantime, many soldiers of his regiment had gathered round, and half-way raised above the morass, looked on in triumph. The prisoner suddenly sprang upon his captor, and seized his right arm; they closed, wrestled, and Sarsfield's officer was flung off the patch of turfy soil into the black water. When he recovered his momentary confusion, he saw that his men had seized upon his antagonist, and were proceeding to despatch him. A sudden recollection of the Enniskillener's bravery aroused his

soldier-like feelings, and he cried out, in tones of command and threat, to have the officer's life saved; at the same time scrambling among them, and forcing the men from their prey.

"Well, I am your prisoner now, and on your own terms," said the rescued man; "though I little thought that a Jacobite could ever make me say so."

"Or I, that any abettor of the Dutchman could so well deserve the honour of being protected by Sir Redmond O'Burke," replied his captor.

"We have heard of you, Sir Redmond," and the conquered party slightly touched his hat! "My name is Miles Pendergast, of Pendergast-hall."

"A stout rebel, as I have ever heard, and as I now bear witness, a courageous gentleman," replied Sir Redmond, bowing a return to Pendergast's salute: "but we waste some time here; I crave your company back to the hill, whence, after safely and honourably bestowing you, I may again engage in my duties."

"Come—but it seems like as if some new fortune has chanced," said Captain Pendergast, looking around him, at all sides.

"Oh, nothing but King James's army in full motion to pursue your general," answered Sir Redmond.

"Nay, by St. George, you mistake now!" continued the prisoner, his manly eye and cheek glowing with the reflux of hope and anticipation.

He augured aright. The tide of battle had again turned. An ally of Ginkle arrived unexpectedly upon the field, rallied the broken and retreating soldiers, once more urged them across the bog, and the Irish were now flying in their turn back to Kircommadon-hill; flying, indeed, although the military word is a bad one to describe their progress through the morass.

"I am mistaken, truly," said Sir Redmond O'Burke, as irregular groups of his own men floundered past them, pronouncing the word, "reinforcement!"

"And what now, Captain Pendergast?"

"Your prisoner, still, according to the terms," answered Pendergast; "and let us gain your position while we can do so, in company with your own soldiers."

"Agreed; but must it indeed be in their company?" looking anxiously and spiritedly over the bog towards Ginkle's side of it; "Must the fellows return with us? can they not be rallied?" he continued, talking to himself; "Halt! stand! but

no ;" the fugitives increased in numbers, and pressed on to the hill with greater energy ; and the shouts of the English rose high, and came near. "No, not this moment ;—so come, sir !"

The English and the Irish officer gained the eminence that arose almost from the verge of the morass ; here they found the soldiers who had passed them, again formed in steady array ; those who arrived with them rapidly fell in with their comrades ; others, who every instant followed, as readily re-occupied their former posts ; an infantry reserve, who had not quitted the hill, joined all ; and in a very short space of time, a formidable centre was once more opposed to the renewed attack of the English force.

"I fear you cannot get out of danger till this fresh bout be over," said Sir Redmond to his prisoner : "yonder is my regiment, and if I defer joining it, in order to place you at the rear, 'tis like to have the honour of a tenth time helping to check the Dutchman, without my humble aid—See ! here splash your friends, by Heaven and good St. Patrick ! Provide for yourself, sir !" and Sir Redmond, cheering, and waving his sword, ran to head his little band, who received him with answering cheers.

Captain Pendergast's first impulse, at being thus left alone, almost at the base of the eminence, and some distance from the Irish centre, was to rush to meet his friends at the verge of the bog, which the foremost of them had already gained. But a manly sense of honour forbade him, when he recollected the pledge he had given to his captor ; and gratitude for life preserved at that captor's hands, further determined him to act a neutral part. His next anxiety was, naturally enough, to remove himself out of peril from a contest in which he could take no share ; and, glancing around him, he jumped into a ditch, now unoccupied by the Irish, and removed from the course which, most probably, the English army would take in their charge up the hill.

But he could observe, conveniently and without notice, from his position in the ditch, all that followed. Nor had he to wait long for matter to interest him. For at least the tenth time, as Sir Redmond O'Burke had intimated, Ginkle's infantry, now chiefly composed of fresh men, bounded out of the morass, and scrambled, shouting, up to the Irish centre. They were received with undiminished fury and bravery, and repulsed more than once, although now their opponents did not quit the hill to pursue them. The adverse lines often intermixed, however,

and pressed each other back and forward, on the contested ground, sometimes coming close upon Pendergast's place of concealment. At last, he recognised the regiment which Sir Redmond had pointed out as his, hastily occupying a position very near to the ditch, in order, along with others, to prepare for continued contest; and he could see that officer waving his hat to his men, and hear him exhorting them to stand fast. Simultaneously, cheers, that he knew to be from his friends, arose upon the Irish left; and, in a few minutes, an aid-de-camp rode up to Sir Redmond O'Burke, bearing him orders to fall back to his first position, and help to concentrate the centre; adding, that some cavalry had just turned their left, and were advancing, along the edge of the bog, to support Ginkle's infantry: "When your lads are in line, sir," continued the aid-de-camp, "the Commander-in-chief would speak with you; and think nothing of this, Sir Redmond; the day is ours yet;" and he rode off.

While Sir Redmond's regiment was in the act of wheeling round to obey, at his word of command, the orders received, some of the men spied Captain Pendergast in the ditch, and presented their firelocks at him. He cried out, and again owed his life to the interference of their Captain, who now requested the prisoner to take a place at his side.

Accordingly, at a brisk pace, Pendergast kept close to his captor. They gained their position; Sir Redmond wheeled his men into line, and then hastily addressed the prisoner: "You will please to give me your company still, sir; this message from the general affords me an opportunity of safely disposing of you for the present: pray, despatch."

The two officers soon cleared the centre, and pushed up the hill beyond them.

"Yonder is one you have heard of," resumed Sir Redmond, pointing to a general officer, who, still some distance above them, seemed anxiously watching the whole line of battle, surrounded by aids-de-camp, and other attendants. "I know his French feathers," answered Pendergast: "Is your Sarsfield here?"

"Second in command, to-day," replied Sir Redmond, "and managing the right yonder: but, credit me, not to be found close in company with St. Rothe: they have never agreed well, St. Rothe is so high, or my Lord Lucan so plain-spoken; and last night, especially, 'tis known they quarrelled outright."

"At any unlucky hour for them and you, Sir Redmond, if there be luck in united council."

"It has not yet turned out so," answered Sir Redmond.

"Well; but if the Frenchman should go down?"

"God forbid, sir! for then, I grant you, we should need a successor in command acquainted with his plan."

This discourse brought them into St. Rothe's presence. After salutations had been interchanged—"I sent for you, sir Redmond O'Burke," said the commander-in-chief, "to demand if you can tell us whether the English centre has been strongly reinforced since its last repulse?"

Sir Redmond replied that, from all he could learn, it was; but that it was not now stronger, notwithstanding, than it had been at its first advance.

"I know not," he continued, "how many horse now remain to reinforce it, after turning our left."

"I care not how many, sir; I spoke but of infantry. My reserve of horse can well overmatch *them*:—Call them up:" to an aid-de-camp, who immediately spurred down the hill at St. Rothe's back: "Here we have double the force, at least, of those you seem to fear, sir: scarce three thousand. I see them come on, after escaping our left—you can see them, are still a good distance beyond the hollow way—scarce three thousand, and I show you six thousand ready to spur after me down the hollow way, cut them to pieces, and then turn upon their infantry, and with the help of our own centre destroy the whole English army.—Here come the deciders of the day!" a great body of cavalry filled up the eminence. "To your post, Sir Redmond O'Burke!—Gallop and follow me!" to the reserve—"and——" St. Rothe stopt speaking. Captain Pendergast, who had been watching the brisk and gallant approach of the English horse, looked up to note why. A shattered and lifeless trunk lay on the ground, at some distance from the prancing steed, which, an instant before, erect, proud, and living, it had bestrode. Pendergast's experience in the field informed him that it was a random cannon-shot which had thus ended the boastings of St. Rothe.

The reserve of horse, of which each man had just been about to spur his charger, and shake the bridle round his neck, paused and looked on in consternation. Many precious moments were thus lost.

"Sarsfield! Sarsfield, to lead us down!" at length cried a veteran officer, and the well-beloved name was repeated by hundreds, although in a tone that bespoke an ominous decrease of spirit.

"Ay, now comes the question you and I debated, Sir Redmond," said Pendergast.

An aid-de-camp had, however, gone off at headlong speed to summon the new commander-in-chief from the right wing. Meantime, Sir Redmond O'Burke, after delivering his prisoner into proper care, hastened to his own regiment. Pendergast continued observant, his situation enabling him to be so. The chill that had fallen upon the reserve of horse, at the sudden and shocking death of St. Rothe, increased every moment.—They recollected the want of concert between the two generals, and their apprehensions of Sarsfield, brave as he was, not knowing what to do in this emergency, consistently with the arrangements and intents of his haughty superior, were expressed to one another in mutterings loud enough for Pendergast to overhear. The pause itself, at the very moment of excitement, disheartened them. And added to this, there came up to them from the base and middle of the eminence, a swelling tumult, which their doubts readily construed into the worst omen. So that when Sarsfield at last appeared pushing to their position by the aid-de-camp's side, talking eagerly, and showing unusual agitation, the men had lost all the spirit necessary to make their force effective.

"Turned our left, you say! I heard not of it," continued Sarsfield, coming nearer: "Where? who? Now I see them! —but they have passed the hollow way you spoke of, and cannot now be intercepted. Ay, and by Heaven are in among our centre! Come, lads, they shall not have it all as they like it! Down upon them, by *any* way!"

While he spoke, and spoke without making an impression, the infantry of the Irish centre came in groups up the hill, flying in utter defeat. The six thousand horse that should have long ago protected them, waited not another moment on the field, but abandoned it without a blow. St. Rothe's death had by this time spread through the whole Irish army, and a general retreat took place; the fugitives, at Sarsfield's word, hurrying in confusion towards Limerick. In a short time, Pendergast was alone upon Kircommadon-hill, in the first twilight of a July evening; for, but a short space elapsed, after the last of the Irish had quitted his side, before the van of the English pressed towards him.

And by the hands of his own friends he had at last nearly lost his life, so impetuous was their charge, and so questionable his situation. Recognised and safe, however, he was about to move forward with them, when a faint voice pronounced his

name. He turned, and saw Sir Redmond O'Burke a prisoner, guarded by a detached party, and obviously exhausted, and unable to use his limbs. In a moment Pendergast was at his side, took his hand, and eagerly inquired what services he could render him?

"Thanks," said the bleeding prisoner; "I am very weak, and unable to go on; entreat your soldiers that I may rest a moment here, in your keeping."

The request was instantly made and complied with. Pendergast caused the wounded man to be borne aside to a spot not exposed to much observation, and detained some soldiers to guard them against intrusion.

"Thanks, again: this is indeed a favour," resumed Sir Redmond, as he vainly tried to lay his writhing limbs on the grass, in some position which would not pain them.

"'Tis nothing; I owe you more, much more," answered Pendergast; "only tell me what that much more, and more after it, shall be—what, Sir Redmond! you change sadly!"

"Water, a drop of water," murmured the old soldier, in an effort to keep himself from swooning.

"Water there is none near us; but make shift with better liquor;" and Pendergast produced a wine-flask and put it to his lips. The dying may drank eagerly.

"This is loss of blood, not fatigue," continued Pendergast; "you have been on the English bayonets since we parted, Sir Redmond—you bleed about the body, too."

"A little, yet enough to let life out: and I do not want it to stay in. Fortune, country, kith, and kin, all but honour is lost. Worthless life, go you with it."

"Say not so, brave friend,—for friend I call you, friend I hold you, friend you have been to me;" and with a manly tear on his lids, Pendergast clasped Sir Redmond's hand with the clasp that only men can give and take.

"Well; and friend I would be called by you," continued Sir Redmond; "but our friendship will end as quickly as it has begun. Cry not nay, again, sir," he went on in a changed and broken voice; "there is that at my heart which needs no earthly comfort, holds no earthly hope. But you have wished to do me a good turn, or rather, to do a good turn to one I shall leave after me, for my sake."

"Your Lady?" inquired Pendergast, after he had watched some time a convulsion in the frame of his new friend, which wholly took away his power of utterance.

"No! I thank God, no!" cried Sir Redmond, with unex-

pected energy; and it seemed, in the upturning of his eyes to heaven, and in the rapid motion of his parched lips, that he endeavored to give praise that the partner of his bosom had already been removed from a life which, after his death, would have been to her, had she not gone before him, a lot of suffering and bitterness.

"Then, you have children?" continued Pendergast, breaking another pause, and willing to assist the dying officer in the expression of his last wishes.

"I had—four," answered Sir Redmond: "four, although I am a man scarce yet stricken in years; four sons, and three of them able to follow me to the field, for their country, their king, and their religion, at the breaking out of these unnatural wars. But I have them not now. One fell at Hillsborough, where we crushed, with young Hamilton at our head, your great Northern Union at a blow, sir!"—martial spirit and party pride lit up for a moment the speaker's eye, and strengthened his tone;—"and him I did scarcely sorrow for, the next my second, a soldier of nineteen, I saw rolling down with the blood-stained Boyne river; and my third, not eighteen, sank at my feet to-day, a few minutes after I parted from you. the man who put a bayonet into the boy's heart did so because my poor Felix had struck it aside when it was aimed at his father's, sir"

Here Pendergast had to support Sir Redmond's head, as it fell back from weakness. It was on his tongue to assuage the anguish of the parent's recollections, by informing him that he too had lost a son, and an only one, upon the field that day;—but a recollection that it was his duty not to interrupt the dying man's train of thought by any concerns of his own, checked the words he was about to utter, and caused him to whisper, instead, "But there yet lives a fourth boy?"

"There does—" answered Sir Redmond, gasping; "my youngest—my darling—the last child of his mother!—and scarce a child yet—and friendless—and fortuneless—for all his family are dead, or exiles—or will be—and all his patrimony seized upon—or run through—lavished upon this cause;—and I—" Pendergast now felt a strenuous pressure, which the speaker had not yet been able to return for his; then he saw the dread struggle; and after Sir Redmond, writhing round, had said, "Oh, God, be watchful over the child here, as I now crave your mercy for myself!"—Pendergast looked upon a corpse.

Long he looked; and then arising, commanded the soldiers

who stood near to accompany him down the hill, and into the bog. His thought was, that he knew where to find the body of his own son, for he had seen him fall. He was successful. The men bore it, still at his bidding, back to the spot he had left ; and there, almost at the top of the hill, he commanded them to make a shallow grave. "They shall lie side by side, even upon this field," he said to himself, "in earnest of the vow I have vowed to the unuttered wish of my former foe,—ay, here shall they lie, forgetful of party rancour, as I shall be forgetful of it to this old man's only living son : for," continued Pendergast, as he walked away, after the little grave had been filled and raised, "the child shall be my child."

CHAPTER II.

Captain Pendergast's first impulse was to proceed directly to seek his adopted son ; but the claims of military duty were imperious, and for the present he felt compelled to give up his purpose.

Immediately after the battle of Aughram, Ginkle sent detachments to reduce and secure important passes on the Shannon ; and in one of those detachments Pendergast's regiment, and necessarily himself, were included. The English general then summoned him to join the main army before Galway ; and as soon as the town surrendered, Ginkle pursued its garrison to Limerick, whither it had been allowed safe conduct, with the honours of war. Thus Pendergast had not a day's respite to undertake a journey, of which the object gradually interested him the more, in proportion to the necessity of deferring its accomplishment.

At length, early in October, he witnessed the ratification of the celebrated treaty, by which the crown of three kingdoms was secured to William III. and the pretensions of that monarch's father-in-law for ever abandoned by the Irish people. Captain Pendergast, although a stanch foe to Catholic ascendency, and in the field to oppose it, was no extravagant party man ; no monopolist, sacrificing the suggestions of justice and fair play to selfishness or revenge ; and he therefore rejoiced, rather than felt disappointed, when he saw that, according to the terms of the treaty, the adherents of

James Stuart were recognised as an honourable, brave, and important enemy; conciliated, in proportion to this estimate of their character; invited to place confidence in their new sovereign, and left free to unite with their fellow-subjects of all sects, in making Ireland a nation. "Yes," resolved Pendergast; "let but the spirit of this treaty remain among us for one hundred years, and all that has yet happened will have happened only for the best."

As it seems indispensable that it should be known in the abstract what the treaty of Limerick really was, an account of it is here taken from a book in every one's hands.

"The Roman Catholics were restored to the enjoyment of such liberty in the exercise of religion as was consistent with the laws of Ireland, and conformable with that which they possessed in the reign of Charles II.

"All persons whatever were entitled to the protection of these laws, and restored to the possession of their estates, privileges, and immunities, upon their submitting to the present Government, and taking the oath of allegiance to their Majesties King William and Queen Mary, excepting, however, certain persons who were forfeited or exiled.

"In order to allay the violence of party, and extinguish private animosities, it was agreed that no person should be sued or impleaded on either side for any trespass, or made accountable for the rents, tenements, lands, or houses he had received or enjoyed since the beginning of the war.

"Every nobleman and gentleman comprised in these articles was authorized to keep a sword, a case of pistols, and a gun, for his defence or amusement.

"The inhabitants of Limerick and other garrisons were permitted to remove their goods and chattels, without search, visitation, or payment of duty.

"The Lords Justices promised to use their best endeavours that all persons comprehended in this capitulation should for eight months be protected from all arrests and executions for debt or damage. They undertook that their Majesties should ratify these articles within the space of eight months, and use their endeavours that they might be ratified and confirmed in Parliament.

"All persons were indulged with a free leave to remove with their families and effects to any other country except England and Scotland.

"All officers and soldiers in the service of King James, comprehending even the Rapparees, willing to go beyond sea,

were at liberty to march in bodies to the place of embarkation, to be conveyed to the Continent with the French officers and troops. They were furnished with passports, convoys, and carriages, by land and water; and General Ginkle engaged to provide seventy ships, if necessary, for their transportation, with two men-of-war for the accommodation of their officers, and to serve as a convoy to the fleet.

"That all the garrisons should march out of their respective towns and fortresses with the honours of war.

"That such as choose to stay behind might dispose of themselves according to their own fancy, after having surrendered their arms to such commissioners as the General should appoint.

"That all prisoners of war should be set at liberty on both sides.

"This is the substance of the famous treaty of Limerick, which the Irish Roman Catholics considered as the great charter of their civil and religious liberties."—*Smollett, Continuation of Hume*, chapter iii. section 12.

It should be mentioned that, in making this extract, some passages have been omitted which contained merely unimportant matter, or details relating only to the mode proposed for carrying terms into effect; such as the manner in which certain moneys were to be paid, &c.

All the passages transcribed will be found to supply information necessary to the comprehension of this story.

If Captain Pendergast felt gratified with the Treaty of Limerick upon public and national grounds, a peculiar private motive much assisted in confirming him in such a frame of mind. He saw that, according to its provisions, Sir Redmond O'Burke's son remained free to possess and enjoy any patrimony that might have descended to him, if indeed any had. This however seemed very questionable, when his father's dying declarations upon the field of Aughram were remembered and considered: and to solve the doubt, as well as to indulge wishes that we have seen him compelled to neglect for some months, Pendergast, very soon after the surrender of Limerick, proceeded in the direction of Sir Redmond's former place of residence.

He performed his journey on horseback, accompanied by a single servant. The man had been a soldier under his command during the recent campaigns, and a close attendant upon his person, at every moment when sterner duties did not otherwise command him to employ himself: nay, his Captain and

he had interchanged the offices of master and man, even before the breaking out of the civil war; had marched from home together at the first levy of the Ulster adherents of King William, and from that day to the present hour shared almost every vicissitude of a long and changeful struggle. It may therefore be concluded that a very friendly understanding subsisted between them. In truth, the old soldier loved his Captain sincerely, though by no means ostentatiously; and Pendergast esteemed him in return, and treated him as well, sometimes as gently, as John Sharpe's temper and character permitted, or rendered advisable for the due upholding of a superior's authority.

For John had a will of his own, a way of his own, and a view of every thing peculiarly his own; and then he had also a humour of his own; a dry, triste vein of what he believed was mirth, and which an ordinary observer might be apt to mistake for the largest portion of his whole character, but which was really but the vehicle for conveying, at least upon most occasions, his bile and bitterness against every person and thing he chose to select for observation. In such times, such an individual could not be expected to carry on his hatreds of any description with a reasonable or even a prudent method; nor could it be supposed that, towards the great object of hatred continually before his mind, he did not indulge to the very utmost extent of loathing and rancour. In fact, popery had grown up in John Sharpe's thoughts into a kind of definite, visible monster, of hideous aspect and proportions; a thing that he and all good people were bound to attack, maim, and kill, at every opportunity,—a real dragon, as it were, such as Guy, Earl of Warwick, had encountered and destroyed. At the same time, there was no rage, no fire, no glow, even in his manner of feeling or speaking, according to this system, against whatever might be the theme of his hatred. But we shall have it in our power to allow him to express himself and his own difficult character in a better way than either could be described for him.

The travellers, passing in a south-easterly direction through the county of Limerick, left behind them tracts of the richest soil; then mostly used as sheep-walks, and even now appropriated, in some degree, to the same purposes. Before the day fell on them, they had entered the county of Tipperary, rich, at least, in turf; and although inferior to the luxuriant soil of Limerick, also holding forth abundant promise to the agriculturist. In 1691, it presented however, along the

wretched road pursued by Captain Pendergast and his servant, a black, bleak, and desolate appearance, which was heightened by the marks of devastation, yet fresh upon it, in the shape of burned cabins, and dilapidated and deserted mansions, from the fury of civil war. Its flatness, so far as the travellers had explored it, farther added to this dreary character, and to the impressions which it was calculated to make upon the spirits of the observers. Indeed, Pendergast and his attendant felt the day's journey an uncomfortable one, and their mutual taciturnity proved that they did.

Towards the conclusion of the next day, their road passed the Galteigh mountains; and now, if change of scenery alone could raise their spirits, they must have experienced a relief. But the sense of forlorn seclusion which fell upon them as they they traversed the shadows of those barren, lumpy hills, little stamped with picturesque features, and at that time wholly uncultivated, was not in the least degree more cheering than the weariness imparted by the flat, open country. Captain Pendergast cleared up, notwithstanding, and put his horse to a brisk pace, ere they had been quite delivered from the Galteighs; because, according to the previous information he had received, Sir Redmond O'Burke's mansion must now be near at hand. Of a frightened-looking peasant who crept along the road, and seemed to look round for a hiding-place when the travellers came up, he inquired in what direction it lay. The man answered in pure Irish, and proved unintelligible to both his Northern hearers: his action, however, was more to the purpose; he pointed up a spacious valley, which ran at right-angles to the road his querists had hitherto pursued; and thither Captain Pendergast spurred.

"Well! the Papishes shame the pigs, oot and oot, in the speech they have," remarked John Sharpe, as he followed his master into the valley; and he spoke without unclenching his teeth from a short dingy pipe, which, almost from morning till night, except when he ate his meals, remained tight between them. Captain Pendergast took no notice, but seemed now more than ever thoughtful, if not depressed.

"Troth, jest!" continued the servant; "and yet, yon 's a bright mon, in his ain mind, I warrant: yes; thinks he has rhetoric enough for a stage;" this was one of John's favourite phrases, of which he had many; and a standing joke, too, as was evinced by the slow, chuckling, "Hu, ugh!" that followed it. Still, his master said nothing. "But your honour has a

something on your heart, I'm thinking," he resumed, coming nearly to his master's side.

"And is that so wonderful, John Sharpe?"

"No, not just so wonderful, your honour; troth, no: and my ain heart is not the lighter for thinking of what I make bold to believe your honour is thinking of along with me."

"What, John?"

"Troth, that it 's little better than a woful home we 're bound to, yon," pointing in a northern direction;—"that is, not precisely bound to this very moment, for your honour has not told me, yet, where this present wild journey, held through this Southern, papish country, is to end, or, for the matter o' that, why it has ever been begun?" In truth, Captain Pendergast had not cared to give his old servant any hint of his present purpose, although usually in the habit of making him a kind of confidant; and ever since they left Limerick, John Sharpe had been tormented by curiosity, and not a little hurt and offended at his master's want of attention, until a few moments before, when, to his great astonishment, he heard the inquiry after Sir Redmond O'Burke's mansion. Then, his curiosity changed into an excess, for which there is no descriptive word; and doubt and misgiving, apprehension and ill-humour, farther took possession of him. He was clever enough, however, from experience of his Captain's character, to suppress all outward show of emotion; nay, to exhibit his usual vein of sad merriment, and to try for information in the manner we see him adopt in his last remarks.

"A woful home, indeed," was Captain Pendergast's only reply.

"And yet, there is balm in Gilead," continued John, assuming, what he rarely exhibited, a truly serious tone:—"Abraham loved Sarah; but when she died, and that he had mourned and wept for her, and buried her in the field bought of the children of Heth, in the land of Canaan, he married another wife, named Cetura, notwithstanding: and moreover, being already blessed in abundance of children."

"He did so, John; but though yon field of Aughram leaves me childless, as well as wifeless, this day, I incline not to follow the Patriarch's example, in that particular. Never shall the image of a living woman supplant the memory of her who—died to give me my only, only boy."

"But also, master," continued John Sharpe, "the Lord moved Abraham, seeing it was jest a natural and praiseworthy yearning, to complain in his vision, saying, 'What wilt

thou give me? I shall go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus,'—and again: 'Lo, one born in my house is my heir.' Genesis, fifteenth chapter, the sacond and the thard varse."

"Such cannot be my case, John. No Eliezer of Damascus, no servant of my house can have that good chance. My brother has sons, and sons of my name; and they are needy, and will want the fortune that now must pass to them—in great part, at the least."

"Doubtless, Captain, if so it must be, your honour's hopeful and worshipful nevoys will have grace to be thankful for whatever share your love and wisdom appoints as their lot; and moreover, contented that you still keep another share for other uses; seeing," continued John, in his own view, "how many blood-relations, besides their ain selves, will look to enjoy the portion of estate your honour says is not marked out for them."

"I have no other blood-relations, however, John, who stand in need of my help, or who will do well to think of being the better of my testamentary dispositions."

"Troth, just, master; and I was forgetful, not to hold in mind how bountifully Providence has already endowed all other members of your worshipful family;—it will be some auld friend, I warrant, who now little dreams of being so beholden til your honour?—"

"No, John."

It was on the tip of John Sharpe's tongue to insinuate another question, such as "Some faithful old follower, then," but his prudence closed his lips, and clenched his teeth firmer than ever upon the short shank of his pipe. After a pause, however, he continued.

"Your honour, of a surety, wouldna be for setting up an alms-house, or a lazar-house, for a pack of idle, gossipping, women? a practice out of date, in these times, though much in vogue in the days of auld Papistry."

"Content you, John, I mean not so."

With a suppressed groan, or rather grunt of impatience, the baffled servant inhaled through his set teeth a quick whiff of tobacco-smoke, and with another grunt, a nasal one, let it out again. John had a head even too much prone to (as he himself would say) "put that and that together;" and he could not now avoid most irritating combinations of his master's inquiry after the house of the deceased rebel nobleman, Sir Redmond O'Burke, with those mysterious hints of a co-heir

who was not to be related to Captain Pendergast. He still was able, however, to disguise his feelings, and to persevere in making out his case in his own fashion.

After allowing, since the Captain's last answer, sufficient time to elapse, to permit the appearance of the former subject having dropped: "And, troth," he said, "this is but a wild and comfortless road we are travelling, wherever it is to stop:" they had for some time been riding up the spacious valley, which was traversed by a chafing stream, and overhung by lofty hills quite uncultivated; and, beneath their horses' feet, what had once been a wide, though rude track-way, could now scarce be distinguished, owing to encroaching vegetation, from the matted soil at either hand.

"I agree, John; and, either these savage hills make their own twilight, or else evening begins to fall, to add to our difficulty: mend your pace, however: we shall soon see the jit of this matter."

They trotted forward at a good rate, and came to a turning in the valley, where, to Captain Pendergast's relief, commenced a stately avenue of sycamores, which must obviously lead to the mansion he sought. The hills at either hand, too, now appeared partially planted, and one, at the left, was completely clothed with wood, which continued along level ground very nearly to that side of the avenue. It was a scene of deep solitude. No living thing appeared in view save the rooks heavily winging homeward to their nests in the tall trees overhead; and their hoarse cawing, together with the fret of the stream the travellers had just left behind, the wood-quest's note from the depth of his profound retreat, and the rustling of the October leaves, which came, now and then, shaken by a gust, upon the heads and shoulders of the lonely strangers, were the only sounds that lulled, rather than disturbed, the intense repose of Nature.

Captain Pendergast paused awhile, impressed by the effect of the scene. Then, looking for the avenue gate, he saw that it had been torn off its rude hinges, and lay in fragments at his horse's feet. Its piers, also, seemed to have been recently ill-treated. He proceeded up the broad avenue, anxiously glancing forward for a sight of the mansion: none appeared. But the avenue soon took a quick turn to the right, and here he once more checked his horse, to contemplate the objects now placed directly before his view.

For about a hundred yards the avenue swept on. It was terminated by two piers, from which also the gate had been

torn. Beyond them, with a considerable space between, were the piers of still another gate, standing more widely apart than their fellows, and of more massive and elaborate construction. From these, to the right and to the left, ran a ruined wall, flanked by trees, and forming three sides of an open square, of which the fourth side was the front of what had once been Sir Redmond O'Burke's mansion; a modern structure, composed of a projecting square mass in the centre, and of uniform adjuncts, which, at right-angles that opposed those of the outer wall, fell backward to make an inner court-yard. The centre was surmounted by a cupola of light and elegant architecture, and was built over an open archway, through which Captain Pendergast still looked into that inner-court-yard, nay, far beyond it, across pleasure-grounds, terraces, and gardens, until the receding and opening valley, which partly formed the distance, was crossed by shadowy hills; and over these, the round red moon just then began to rise, and a mutilated statue elevated upon a pedestal, in the remote pleasaunce of the mansion, cut blackly and sharply against her disk.

This, then, was the building the traveller had come far to visit; but a second glance informed him that it no longer was in a state to give a welcome to any visiter. We have noticed that its avenue-gates were shattered, and the wall of its outer-court in ruins; now he saw that the walls of the mansion itself were partially blackened with fire, its battlements broken, its windows dashed in, its halls silent, its hearths desolate.

CHAPTER III.

"Friends of ours have been here, John Sharpe," said Captain Pendergast, after he and his servant had stood some time at the bottom of the avenue, observing the ruin.

"Hu, ugh!" chuckled John, "and I believe you guess at the truth, Captain: it does look just like a place that the true-blues had a night in. I wonder what old Romish grandee yon was in his day: hu, ugh! troth, just."

"John, you are a bigot."

"Well, Captain; 'tis worthy of a fresh feed till the nose-comforter, howsomever—ugh, ugh!" he continued, slowly and methodically taking out of his pouch, while the reins rested

on the neck of his tired and patient steed, a little leathern packet, containing, under many careful foldings, a piece of tobacco, a flint and steel, and touch-paper; which latter, he said, no man but himself knew how to make, "and it took the spark only for showing the flant and steel til it, or just letting it hear ae clash atween 'em."

"Though, upon second thought, I hope you may be only fool, John," resumed his master.

"And it's just well to be any thing, these times," still chuckled the old soldier, again glancing up at the ruin, and then sinking his chin on his breast, with a repeated "hu, ugh!" of an increasing joyful character, while he proceeded very systematically to fill his pipe, and "show" the flint and steel to his touch-paper.

"And yet, within yonder walls I had hoped to find a friend —or one whom I had foredoomed to be a friend," resumed Pendergast, speaking out his own thoughts, rather than now addressing his attendant. John Sharpe heard the words, notwithstanding, and commented upon them too, with a fresh chuckle of exceeding delight, for which the reader can account by recollecting former allusions to his thoughts and feeling.

"Be silent, sir, and advance with me to note if any living being yet bides in the ruin," said his master, offended at his freedom, and in a tone which John knew how to value. Both arrived, accordingly, at the gate at the top of the avenue; but here their proposed investigation seemed stopped; for a few paces from the piers, they encountered a wide ditch, filled with water, over which, at the point they commanded, a bridge had once been thrown, although at present only some of its fragments lay on either bank.

In this dilemma, Captain Pendergast commanded John Sharpe to join him in shouting loudly towards the desolate building. The deep and prolonged echoes which answered them, as well from the hills and woods around as from its own walls, were so startling, that master and man paused and listened to their cadences as if they had been attending to an answer shouted back by real voices. Night began to fall rapidly. The extensive and shattered pile grew blacker as the rising moon rolled her chaste glory over the hills and sky at its back. Her rays came streaming through more than one window-hole of the front, either because another window in the rear, exactly confronting it, allowed free passage to the beam, or that the wall of the rear itself was partially thrown down.

The benighted travellers mutually disliking their present situation, although neither expressed their sensations, shouted again and again; and at last Captain Pendergast thought that a figure darkened the moonshine at one of the windows spoken of, disappearing again in a twinkling, and allowing the beautiful light to stream on. He asked his attendant if he had noticed such an occurrence. John said he had not; but while they discussed the point, both now were aware that a man certainly stood in the space of another window, which remained in black shadow, and seemed watching them. Perhaps, when he first appeared at the moon-lit window, this person quickly remembered his conspicuous position, and had left it to pursue his observations in a less exposed one. Indeed, the faintest indication of a figure was at present given to our friends; for its dress seemed as black as the shadow which encompassed it.

Their shouts arose shriller. Still the echoes alone made answer; and the figure did not move.

"The stony-hearted Papish!" said John Sharpe; "what, if we give ae bark til him, Captain?" showing a pistol.

"On your life, no!" answered his master; "the man only fears us—we shall prove him a friend."

"What's that?" continued John, chucking back his head, as something cut with a sharp sound through the air close by his and his Captain's face: "Wooden shoes to my feet, your honour! but if we will not bark til him, the Papish is whistling til us."

"How, John?"

"'Twas a cross-bow arrow, Captain, or say I don't know a brass sixpence from a silver coin of the same name; for though such unchristian weapons be out of vogue in fair campaigning, your honour remembers that woodsmen, gamekeepers and their like, still practise with them, and Romish woodsmen most of all so—Ha!" a second time the same twitting sound passed the speaker, and he suddenly caught his nose between his fingers and thumb, as if it had been grazed; "I'm touched, now, Captain," he continued, "by one of the like viperish, Papish skin-scratchers: and now, of a surety, your honour will not forbear me from sending over our compliments in return."

"Hold, yet!—the man yonder has not stirred a finger; I have been watching him as attentively as he seems watching us," cried Pendergast; "but, by Heaven, John! we must turn round here to the left!" a third arrow struck the Captain's saddle and was now quivering in it—"See! the assassin,

or assassins, shelter at the edge of the wood, across the meadow—one has just glanced in among the trees—face round with me, but stand steadily first, and a shot each, before advancing."

These words were little more than said, when the sharp explosion of the travellers' pistols rang through the stilled and shadowed solitude, calling up all its echoes, until the two shots seemed followed by a volley. The next second, rooks cawed in the trees down the avenue, and other birds screamed in the woods; and at the same time Pendergast believed he caught a sudden exclamation from the ruin. Confronting it quickly, he perceived that the dark figure had abandoned the window-space; and while he looked, a stir in the moonshine in the inner court-yard drew his glance, and he saw a person clad in long drapery, hurry across the ground at the pedestal of the statue before mentioned.

"Prime and load, and advance now!" cried Captain Pendergast; and he and his valiant man were soon galloping across the open space at their left to the skirt of the great wood. In their career, a fourth arrow struck off John Sharpe's hat, and he and his master immediately answered by again discharging their pistols.

"Stop wit de hand!—shentlemans stop! *graw-gal*-boy! not none but *graw-gal*-boy in wood!" shouted an old man's voice from another direction. The accents were those of one in great distress and agitation, and vehement supplication.

Captain Pendergast halted, and cried "Stand!" as he saw the speaker run to cross his way, throwing up his hands, and still shouting uninterruptedly.

"Och, ay, sirs!" and the old man stood still accordingly, while the travellers closed upon him; Pendergast, now jumping from his saddle, and leaving his horse in John Sharpe's care—"Och, ay, stands—all—all he bids—but he not hurt boy—good, poor gorçoon—in wood for kill bird—rabbit—nien at all more—*graw-gal*-boy!" and the advocate still spoke and gesticulated in great emotion. Pendergast stood close to him in the moonshine. The old man was quaintly attired. He wore, in part, the very clumsiest, rustic imitation of the civil attire of the day; namely, brogues, hose of a dingy red colour, and breeches bagged and slashed above the knees; but his long-skirted, collarless coat was of a cut that intimated the character of a servant or follower of a great family, as also did its broad, crested buttons; and on his white-haired head was a hunting-cap.

"I understand not your speech," said Captain Pendergast, in reply to the effort of the old Southern peasant to express himself in a language with which he was very little acquainted; "at the least, your meaning is doubtful to me; but if you comprehend plain English, when spoken, better than you can speak it, know that I have been shot at with arrows from yon wood-side, while here, waited on by my servant, upon a friendly business."

"Sure, ay, ould Rory knowns; only not shot for kill—arrow shot at rabbit—ay—"

"And how many sportsmen are in the wood?" interrupted Pendergast. Methinks you spoke of a boy; what men are with him?"

"Och! sure nien man to him—nien! nien! nien left—ochown!"

"Can I see the boy?"

"Anan?" the old man stept back, frightened, and glanced anxiously towards the wood: "Can him see boy, aroon? it's what him say is that?"

"Yes; and you need fear nothing on his account or your own: I have told you that my visit to this wild place is friendly."

"Avoch! wild place! ay!—it's wild place it is, now! wirra sthrue! ochown!" and he abandoned himself to lamentations, which Pendergast thought might be partly sincere, partly affected to evade answering the direct inquiry. And John Sharpe seemed of the same opinion; for having come up, leading his master's horse, he said suddenly—

"Fule of a Papish! reply to his honour's question."

"Silence, Sharpe," cried Captain Pendergast angrily, as the old man looked still more frightened, "and offer no other word on this matter. My servant is wayward," he continued in a mild voice to old Rory; "but I once more assure you, on the faith of a gentleman, that we are here as friends."

"Friends! avoch! nien friends come now—nien alive to come—sure, no—ochown! and sure nien ever at all, to dress in cap and feather, like him honour."

"Nay, old man, this grows tedious; I am tired with my long journey hither, and not in the humour for cross-purposes, especially when assured of my own intentions; so we will cut the discourse short. If the boy you speak of be, as I suspect and hope he is, the youngest and only living son of your old master, Sir Red——."

"Och, nien, nien!" interrupted the old servant, gaining the

height of his terror; "never at all! What him do here to ould Rory? sure, nien; graw-gal-boy, Rory's own sisther's son, here for having shoot in wood—hi-hoo! i-hoo!" he continued, facing round to the trees, as he shouted shrilly, and clapped his hands—"be going home, Murtach, ma-chree, to mother, over hill: it's the dark, a-vich, and nien more arrows till the morrow at morning!"

"If Sir Redmond O'Burke's son listens to me," resumed Pendergast, also speaking loudly, "I advise, I entreat him, not to withdraw, but rather advance to my side: I bear a message from his father."

Old Rory uttered a cry of fearful astonishment at these words, and again clapped his hands. Another exclamation reached Pendergast from the wood's edge. He turned his head quickly in the direction whence it came. The topmost boughs of one of the trees that skirted the wood were in motion, and presently a boy was seen clambering down from branch to branch, with great agility and earnestness: not waiting to slide along the trunk, he swung himself by the hands out of a branch some yards above the ground, alighted firmly on his feet, and quickly crossed the meadow in a direct line towards the travellers. He seemed about twelve; tall for his years, and slight, but of elegant proportion; and his erect air, his step, and the grace, if not graceful motion of his limbs, belied, to Pendergast's mind, old Rory's pretentions to a relationship with the young stranger.

As he came close, Pendergast noticed his attire with sorrow, because it bespoke his destitute situation. The boy wore a tight-fitting, long-backed, wide-skirted, coat of a velvet texture, and it had once been highly embroidered; but the gold filigree work was now tarnished, and in part worn or rent off, and the garment itself burst in many places. He was bare-headed; his light hair flowing in curls over his shoulders. The deep linen collar which folded down under his chin, seemed in a soiled state. His thighs and legs were covered with cloth and hose of as coarse materials as those worn by old Rory; and like him, too, he trod in common Irish brogues. And yet, wretched as were the circumstances indicated by this ill-sorted union of the costume of better days, with that of present poverty, the boy showed in his whole expression nothing of a self-abasing consciousness of misfortune. On the contrary, as has been said in other words, his mien and step were high and proud; and when he stopped suddenly, and confronted Captain Pendergast, the glowing eagerness of his eyes,

and the out-turning of his full, almost heavy lips, told that his poor appearance was quite forgotten, partly in a good opinion of himself, partly in the subject that engrossed and agitated his mind. A cross-bow and a quiver were slung at his back.

"The spawn of the scarlet b——!" muttered John Sharpe; "he dares come into our presence with the very weapons dangling ahint him."

And John, sucking his pipe ever more spitefully for each renewed glance, scowled at the young archer; and old Rory increased his outcries of fear and lamentation at every step that brought him nearer. But, unheeding either, the boy look straightly and firmly into Captain Pendergast's eyes, as he said, the moment he stopped short, "I am Sir Redmond O'Burke's only living son—who are you that speak of a message from my father?"

"His friend; Pendergast, of Pendergast Hall, young sir?"

"His friend? my father had no friend of that name, or wearing that livery," he added, peering closely at the Captain's military attire.

"He had not, I grant you, to your knowledge, or before he left home for the wars; and yet I was his *last* friend."

"How,—would you tell me that my father changed sides, sir? would you dare tell me that?" asked young O'Burke very indignantly.

"No: he was as true a gentleman as ever proved loyal, through thick and thin, to an indifferent cause."

"Indifferent cause, sir? but I pause not now on your word," he continued eagerly, while tears gathered in his eyes—"what message do you bear from my father?"

"That you ride with me from this place, and take up your abode in my house."

"Ah!" cried the boy, jumping back; "a trick to make me a prisoner!"

"Young gentleman," expostulated Pendergast, "be not so self-opinioned: these wars are over; peace reigns in the land, with some honour to your father's cause; and I could not, dare not make you a prisoner, if I would."

"And that is true?" young O'Burke advanced again: "But am I to meet my father in your house, sir?" he asked in a voice not confident with hope or expectation.

"No, my boy," answered Pendergast solemnly.

"And why not? where is he? Oh! we have heard some rumours here; part from friends, part from enemies; but all so loose, that we could not, would not credit them! Yet now,

sir, you, I fear, bring us the tidings, indeed! I call to mind your words—You were my father's *last* friend, you said? Where arose your friendship?"

"At Aughram."

"And there he engaged you to bear me this message?"

"There; and it was his *last message*, too."

"The boy, shrieking like a woman, suddenly dropped, sitting on the grass, covered his face with his hand, and while he rocked to and fro, continued to utter the shrill laments that, at his years, expressed the orphan's grief for the loss of a beloved parent, mixed up with a cutting sense of helplessness and destitution. Old Rory knelt at his side, held him in his arms, and instead of trying to sooth his anguish, added to it by his own wild and almost fearful cries. Captain Pendergast, regarding the pair in silence, felt his own tears flow. "Here," he thought, "here, in the depths of the domains of his fathers, and within sight of their ruined house, and only supported by that last faithful old follower,—here, in the light of the moon, houseless and ragged, it is indeed sad news for the boy to hear, and a sad scene for me to witness.—Alight, John Sharpe, and assist me in comforting this lad and old man."

Without a word, John descended from his saddle; and, notwithstanding all his habitual crabbedness of feeling, his master heard him snuffle, in evidence that even his eyes were infected.

"Rory," pursued Pendergast, "let us all stand on our feet, and look about for some place of shelter for the night; I am hungry and thirsty, and wish you to purchase me food and drink." Rory felt a heavy purse thrust into his hand; he looked up stupidly; ceased weeping, and arose. "Prevail on my young friend to take my arm;—my hand, first, Rory," continued the speaker, "be assured I am anxious he should love me. His father saved my life twice in one day; I could not preserve his, afterwards, at the turn of the battle; but, Sir Redmond O'Burke bequeathed him to me, and I have sworn he shall be a son to me; and the oath was made, Rory, above the grave in which my own hands assisted to stretch, side by side, this young boy's father, and my own only son." These words, as had been intended, found their way to young O'Burke's ear, and also produced the desired effect. He uncovered his face, looked up at Pendergast, and saw his tears in the moonlight; and then he jumped to his arms, and gave him embrace for embrace.

CHAPTER IV.

"I HAVE no roof to offer you, sir," said young O'Burke, soon afterwards, "but Rory Laherty's den in the heart of the forest; and that is not as good a one as even he has been used to: we made it, with our four hands, since his house was burnt down."

Expressing himself contented with any accommodation, Pendergast requested his young friend to show the way through the wood. John Sharpe, his gentler feelings passed and gone, and now holding a gruff, quaint silence, followed with old Rory, who, still agitated and afflicted, kept up an incessant account, in broken English, of the recent sufferings of his master's family; no one word of which (when understood), excited aught save the contempt of the hearer; except, perhaps, that now and then his "ugh, hee!" hinted a gratification to his mechanical hatreds and aversions, arising out of some peculiar instance of the severities acted towards the retainers of Sir Redmond's house, by the detachment of King William's army which had been despatched to attack and destroy it.

While Pendergast, leaning on the boy, approached the wood, he heard John Sharpe exclaim suddenly, "Captain, look close! 'ware ambuscade!"

His master, glancing forward, certainly saw some person glide from the skirt of the wood into its dark intricacies, and disappear. It was, he believed, the same individual, at least one wearing the same singular dark drapery, whom he had before observed in the window-space of the ruined mansion. He stopped, and asked the boy, "Who was that?"

Young O'Burke said he had seen no one.

"My young sir—but no, tell me your christian name before I speak farther."

"Patrick," answered the boy frankly, though a little surprised at his companion's remarkable manner.

"Well, then, Patrick, tell me—were you alone in the wood a while ago?"

"All alone, sir," still frankly.

"And sent the four arrows across the meadow with your own hand?"

"With my own hand, sir; and *could* have sent ten after them, mayhap with better aim, for I ever grow better at the cross-bow after a waste shot or two; ay, sir, and *would*, but for Rory; for I had no thought to wait to be dragged, like a dog, from my hiding-place, and tied neck and heels on a garron, and led off to be murdered by men come, as I then believed, to have the life of the last O'Burke."

"Very proper, and I do not quarrel with your cross-bow play, though I had well nigh had the odds against me in it. But resolve me another question. What people can be now in the wood, to your knowledge?"

"None, sir. I am sure there is never a man, gentle or simple, dares show his head within miles of my father's house, barring Rory Laherty and myself; or, supposing there were, I or he should know of them; and, in truth, we know of none."

"And yet I saw a man move into the wood before us, and one, I reckon, whom I have seen an hour ago, in another place."

"If so it be, sir, he is but some poor runaway from his own burnt home to ours here. Doubt nothing in any case; all such must be friends of an O'Burke, and of an O'Burke's friend."

"You know Rory to be thoroughly honest?" pursued Pendergast.

"Is it Rory, sir? Rory! my own poor old foster-father! reared up in my family since he was a child! Come, sir—and my only friend, since—oh come, sir! By the soul of my father!"—the boy again burst into vehement tears—"Rory and I will fight against any foe of yours, and not abet them."

"I believe it, Patrick;" Pendergast pressed his arm—"so, show us your wood-nest."

In a few moments all were winding, or rather scrambling, their way through the forest; for as yet no path was visible, and the brushwood proved thick and matted, and the trunks of the trees very close together; so close, indeed, that although the October winds had begun to thin the foliage of their branches, not a ray of moonshine could penetrate to the adventurers through the massive screen overhead.

In some time, however, Pendergast caught through the trees, at a distance, the broken beams of the moon, and the party soon escaped from the woody depths upon a patch of comparatively open ground, where the grass was short and fresh, and dotted with quivering light and shade. In its centre

appeared a small pile of stones, loosely huddled together, and surmounted by a few more, shaped into the rude semblance of a cross: near at hand was a little bubbling spring. John Sharpe started at the sight of the primitive altar; and, to Captain Pendergast's surprise, so did Patrick O'Burke and his old fosterfather. Then they addressed each other in Irish, and their tones seemed those of surprise and inquiry.

"Have you not passed this way before?" asked Pendergast. The boy said, "Yes, every day."

"But not seen the stones till now?"

"No," his young friend replied, though they could not have escaped his notice had they previously been there; in fact, they must have been piled up within the last few hours, and hence his and old Rory's surprise.

"And piled up by the man I have twice observed near us," continued Pendergast: "but lead on."

"We are at home," said Patrick.

"A leaky roof, truly," observed the Captain, glancing up at the blue sky.

"You shall see, sir."

There had been a natural pit, or hollow, almost in the middle of the spread of open ground: a gradual descent between steep and almost perpendicular banks. Over this, Rory and his foster-son had laid strong branches, and thin boughs, and lastly sods, until the hollow quite disappeared, and the whole seemed an equal surface. A few holes, invisible to any unsuspicious eye, were left, however, to let air and light in, and smoke out; and at the point where the descent began, the architects had preserved an orifice some feet wide, which, every time they entered or abandoned the retreat, was carefully hidden with fresh-pulled boughs, so disposed as to appear growing out of the earth. Neither seemed to have contemplated that, although their hiding-place might not stand much chance of being descried, it might, nevertheless, be very suddenly invaded by any wanderer who, as much to his own peril as to theirs, should happen to take for granted what they prided themselves upon making so plausible—namely, that the frail roof of the den was firm ground. But no matter for this deficiency of their plan: such was the abode into which the last son of Sir Redmond O'Burke invited his new protector to descend.

When the bushes were removed, a rude ladder appeared at the mouth of the orifice which they had concealed. All was pitchy dark below. Rory, after a few words in Irish, pre-

cipitated himself first into the rayless abyss, and the rest of the party awaited his preliminary arrangements to make them welcome. Presently the void became illuminated by an intermittent flame, and he was heard puffing at his fire. Pendergast and the abhorring and still suspicious John Sharpe, then descended the ladder; Patrick O'Burke stopped half-way down to pull the boughs over the orifice.

"Let it not trouble you, Patrick, except your thought be to stuff the wind out," said Pendergast: "the day has passed when you needed to fear detection, you or any friend of yours; and truly, our only need for hiding ourselves in this pit to-night, depends on the supposition that there is no better resting-place at hand."

"Nor is there, sir," answered Patrick; "no cabin on my father's lands was left standing."

"Ugh, ugh!" commented John Sharpe. His master sufficiently corrected him with a look, and ordered him to assist Rory in some cooking process which the old man was undertaking at his turfen fire; then continued:—"Well, Patrick, 'twas a pity; yet no more than others would have done on my lands in Far North, if it had come to their turn: so never heed the hole, for the present; it will help to rid us of the smoke of our fire, which, after all, looks comfortable. Your hand, while you turn in the ladder."

"Queen of heaven!" cried Patrick, grasping tightly the sides of the ladder, as with his back to Pendergast, he looked up to the black orifice. His friend also looked up thither, and saw a pale, wan, strongly-marked face gazing through the opening. The Captain's first impulse was to draw a pistol, while old Rory clapped his hands, and ejaculated as usual, and John Sharpe seconded his master; but a steady observation of the face told that it could not be an enemy's. Want and misery solely seemed to give it its startling expression; and its sunken eyes glared only with fear at the strangers, and with hunger at the viands now cooking on Rory's fire.

"Hold my legs tight, or I shall fall, sir," continued Patrick.

"What, boy! afraid of such a poor hungry man as that?" said Pendergast.

"It is no man, but the ghost of Father James, my father's chaplain; he was slain in his flight from our house."

"A papish priest's ghost!" muttered John Sharpe; "hu, ugh; and as it must needs be like to himself, notwithstanding it is so muckle the less harmful, I was curious to see, for the first time in my life, the ——"

"Keep silence, I warn you, sir," interrupted Pendergast; "this is no ghost, Patrick, but your old friend himself, or rather I suppose, a moiety of him, come to prefer a claim on our hospitality, with a good appetite."

"Food, food, in charity's name!" said the new-comer, in weak accents. In a few minutes, Pendergast had helped the starving man down the ladder, placed him sitting on dry rushes and moss, near the fire, and assisted by Patrick, gave him to eat of the first slice of a haunch of venison, now partially cooked, according to Rory Laherty's best method. And in the person of Father James, Pendergast was assured he saw the individual who had appeared watching him and Sharpe from the ruin, and afterward on the edge of the wood. He remarked the wanderer's dark-brown ecclesiastical undress, and remembered the ample drapery of the suspicious figure.

While Father James ate, and afterward drank, his eyes fixed with a stupified recognition upon young O'Burke. The boy, experiencing much pity and reverence, and perhaps still under the influence of his recent terror, regarded him with a stare almost as vacant. Presently, the priest's eyes grew heavy, the lids often falling and opening again; then he mechanically changed his look to the fire; feebly stretched out his hands to the blaze, rubbed them, looked again at Patrick, and smiled; and then his head nodded to his breast, and with the weak smile on his lips, he fell asleep. Rory and Pendergast laid him down gently, and at his ease, upon the soft couch of rushes and moss, the old campaigner covering his limbs with his riding cloak; a merciful act, which drew from John Sharpe one of his most expressive nasal grunts; and "let him sleep his fill," said Pendergast, "he will wake up a new man: meantime, Rory, we can judge of your cookery."

With an almost savage energy of action, for which every thing he did was remarkable, the old gamekeeper proceeded to dispose his viands in eating form. The venison was supported by hares, rabbits, and wood-pigeons, all roasted, and not very free of turf-ashes, nor equally browned on their surfaces; and Rory once more changing his character into that of waiting-man, laid his fare upon flat stones, previously made hot, and ostentatiously placed a single knife, a hunting one, beside the venison. He had previously put a bottle of French wine in Father James's hands; now he produced half a dozen more, of different kinds, adding at the bottom of the board, where John Sharpe and he were to sit, a little gallon barrel of brandy. Pendergast expressed his surprise at the presence of

these last good accompaniments to a substantial dinner; and young Patrick informed him that they had been stealthily brought to the den by Rory, who, in his troubled and objectless visits to the adjacent ruin, since the military abandoned it, fortunately discovered a wine-cellar, into which the visiters had failed to penetrate.

While the two new friends spoke apart, Rory was watching his young master's eye. Their glances met, and Rory made an expressive sign.

"Why, yes, foster-father," said the boy, smiling sadly, "make your very heart glad, and bring it out at once; the only fragment of finery he has been able to snatch at in the day of waste, sir," he continued, addressing his guest.

Rory ran to the side of the den, and began displacing some huge stones piled up against it. John Sharpe laid down the leg of a hare which he had been tearing with his teeth, and watched his rapid motions with some suspicion. Presently appeared a hole, which the old man's exertions had cleared, and into this he thrust his arm at full length, and drew forth what seemed a bundle of twisted hay; but finally he produced from the careful envelope a massive silver cup, supported by three legs, highly embossed, and showing the crest of the O'Burkes. It was quickly placed on the ground at his young master's right-hand, and supper went on.

Patrick O'Burke, though but a boy, courteously attended to his guest. Rory Laherty "made much" of John Sharpe, who, wrought upon chiefly by the good food and liquor, and at length, a little by the old man's eager hospitality, condescended to relax the austere rigidness of his features, and to subside into the kind of contemptuous ironical mirth which he sometimes exhibited. While Rory continued to overheap the flat stone before him, or refilled his horn—"Thanks til ye, mon," John would grumble, slowly smacking his lips as he stared straightforward to his master, just smiling in a sort that seemed to say, "How stricken by our presence the Papishes be, poor bodies! but the fare's no' so bad neither: so, come." Had he known Rory better, he would not have felt so flattered by his civilities. The old fellow was every whit as shrewd as he, and strange to assert, thought John Sharpe as great a blockhead as John Sharpe thought Rory Laherty: nay, they hated and despised each other with equal force on both sides, although each made the egotistical mistake of imagining that it was impossible his companion could respond his sentiments; or, it [illegible] never entered into the head of

either. Their mutual oversight, as well as their mutual rancour, sprang from their ignorance. Had Rory thought less uncharitably, and more justly, of the heresy of Protestantism; and had John Sharpe known an iota of Rory's creed, they would have proved better friends: and again, had they previously observed the different manners in which subdued, though strongly-felt sentiments were indicated in their different communities—that is, had John had opportunities of studying the Roman Catholic people of the south, and Rory the Protestant people of the north (than whom scarce any two of the nations of the earth can differ more widely), John's sententiousness and sober gruffness would not have seemed stupidity to his entertainer, nor Rory's garrulity and vivacious energy something of the same kind to the entertained person; at the same time that neither manner could have long hidden the mental reserves which both were now so successful in disguising. Such are the mistakes occasioned by not knowing the world.

But, apart from the mere habitual shrewdness of Rory in veiling his dislike and contempt under a guise of vehement politeness, that might well pass for folly, he had at present a particular motive for so doing. He hoped that his young master was to be served by the new-comers; and he would as soon have put his arm to roast for them, in the turfen fire, as by word or look convey any offence that might mar the fortunes of the last son of Sir Redmond O'Burke. In perfect candour, he was farther helped on in his amiable duplicity—(there is such a thing, even if Rory does not deserve having it said of him,)—by a lurking fear that the friendship proffered by the strangers was hollow, and assumed only for the purpose of entrapping and destroying his foster-son and himself.

After the meal had proceeded some time, Patrick O'Burke, raising the massive cup to his lips, which now brimmed with wine, said, in a low tone that would not disturb the sleeping priest—"Mr. Pendergast, it does not beseem my years to drink bumpers of claret, and I, therefore, stand excused if I but put my lips to this cup: but my lips I *will* put to it, to toast your health, sir, and welcome to O'Burke's country."

"Thanks, my boy; and I will take it now, to drink to our future love and good fellowship in Far North."

"I join you, in the heart, sir; and yet it will be a black day, the day I leave the place I was born in, and know so well, for one that holds none of my kindred, and that I have never seen: the fields, and hills, and streams, and glins, Rory,"

turning to his foster-father, while his eyes moistened, "every stick and stone of which you and I could tell—ay, to the very yellow pebbles on the bottom of the clear brook in the summer, —and I to go alone, Rory, to make acquaintance with new hills, and glins, and streams."

"Rory shall come with us, if you like," interrupted Pendergast. The proposition dried the tears of Patrick and the old man, and the latter, jumping up with a joyful cry, ran to embrace his young master; and then he knelt and kissed, not in a mere formal way, but twenty times over, Captain Pendergast's hand.

"The blubbering Papish," grumbled Sharpe: "and what does your honour preceesely intend that Mr. Rory should do, in the bonny North?" he continued, addressing his master.

"Just any thing he is most fit and able to do for his bread, John."

"Troth, jest," pursued John; "and, doubtless, that will consist in service upon the body of his young master, there."

"Ay—nien, Rory says," interrupted the object of Sharpe's questions;—"him larn, Sir Patrick," bowing to his foster-son —"him larn, Sir Patrick, shoot more rabbit—more bird—sure, ay—always more—but never nien sarvice else, Rory know—can make nien, indeed, ochown."

"He speaks true, sir," said Patrick; "old Rory would prove but a clumsy body-man, and, moreover, the want of liberty, the want of sun and air, ay, and shower and storm, and a country-side to roam over, would soon kill the old man, I fear," he added in a whisper.

"Then, let Rory be our gamekeeper, John," resumed Pendergast, smiling with an expressive meaning at his man; "it seems the office he best can fill at Pendergast Hall."

Patrick and Rory were again delighted; but John Sharpe answered only in a dry way, although he felt anguish within him: "It's like, so; nevertheless, your honour used to think that one John Sharpe could fill the place, too; troth, jest."

"But, surely, can fill others as well, to a tittle, John; and as M'Nevin is dead, I had a thought of making my late gamekeeper my future land-steward."

"See there til it!" resumed the new officer, his eyes opening widely upon his master, in mixed surprise and pleasure; "thanks til your honour," he continued, when a selfish abstraction gave him time, and even yet the words had little energy in them; "and maybe, I can't, as your honour says;" now he grew, according to him, pleasant; "maybe, I can't fill auld

Sam M'Nevin's shoes ; no harm in trying, howsomever ; hugh, ugh !"

" Well, John ; report what hour it is."

" Come out, Tell-truth," chuckled John, becoming still more mirthful, as, slowly and cautiously, he drew from his pocket the article he so encomiastically addressed. At first appeared, suspended to a steel chain of massive proportions, something in a brown leather case ; which case, smiling all the time, he slid off; then the eye rested on another leather case, of different texture from the first ; and finally, he exposed to view a watch, of the diameter of, and almost as round as a twenty-four pound shot, of which the back was encrusted with some green composition ; and that back, as well as the glass of the huge time-piece, underwent furbishing from the loose cuff of his jacket, ere John continued, smiling affectionately at the hands of the dial, " Preceesely half of the hour, and the saxth minute after eleven of the clock at night, by ane watch that's as true as the sun ; troth, jest ! by which account," proceeding to envelope his infallible oracle again ; " as I reckon, his Papish reverence, yon, has enjoyed indifferent sound sleep these three hours last passed ;—though, bless my gracious eyes ! he sleeps no longer, nevertheless !" added John, staring at the priest, and starting in some alarm, as he found the eyes of the supposed sleeper fixed on his.

" No, friend, I do not sleep ; and if I have slept, it was against my will and my purpose," answered Father James, rapidly, and in a husky voice ; " and to the unintended lapse I owe, doubtless, the ill chance of falling into merciless hands," he continued, his eyes expressing a wild and incoherent agitation ; " but since it is so, welcome the fate that, often narrowly 'scaped, gives me rest at last ; and I but pray——"

" Father James !" interrupted young O'Burke, who had stepped softly to his back, and as he spoke, he caught his old friend by the arm. Without looking behind, or, as it seemed, recollecting the sound of a well-known voice, the ecclesiastic shrieked hoarsely, flung himself on his face, and in broken, but still rapid sentences, went on—" That you shoot me, or sabre me, on the open plat, in the wood—my sole prayer ! that ye drag me up—fling me at the foot of the cross of stones—I raised the sign of hope, there, with my own hands, since the night-fall—we were all so much in need of a chapel for worship —and then I went to seek some that would be glad to meet me in it—an old man and a young boy——"

" They are at your side ; see," resumed Patrick ; " feel my

hand, Father James—hear my voice, your old pupil's voice——"

Again crying out, feebly though wildly, the priest knelt up, caught Patrick in his arms, and continued, "You in the toils, too! and for me! doubtless, for me! you sought to save your poor tutor, Patrick, and now you share his lot! May God forgive me!—But oh, I do not deserve forgiveness for this! I should not have wandered here to peril you! The rocks and the caves were my fitter abode—and there, Patrick, there I could have baffled them for ever and a day, good boy! Ay, ever since the flight, on the first morning, my limbs got the strength and fleetness of your own stag-hounds! when they showed themselves at a distance, among the clouds of the hills, I have ventured leaps, Patrick, from rock to rock, that would put your feats to shame!" he now whispered less distinctly than before, and the vague smiles which accompanied his words bespoke his shattered state of mind.

Seclusion, indeed, severe study, and a total ignorance of the world, had, previous to the recent shock it received, divested that mind of the power of resisting a great and unexpected calamity. Pendergast, from a conversation with Patrick, as well as from his own remarks, saw how the case stood, and applied himself to console the sufferer. At first he allowed the boy to try his unassisted efforts; and, after some time, Father James seemed disposed to believe that his pupil and himself were not encompassed by enemies, or placed in immediate or deadly peril. But it was a much harder task to give him a single clear perception of the fact that, according to the Treaty of Limerick, so lately signed, his religion, and he, as a minister of that religion, were safe from future hostility, and entitled to a recognition and a place in the land. The priest smiled again at such assertions, and it was evident that his wavering recollection of what he had gone through, merely because he was a Catholic priest, now made him incredulous, at once, and incapable, by re-exciting his mind, of deliberative reasoning upon this topic. Captain Pendergast seconded Patrick, in vain, giving himself as authority for the good tidings both sought to impress. The clergyman told Patrick he was imposed upon, and Pendergast that he wished to create a delusion for some terrible purpose.

At length Patrick adduced, as strong though indirect proof of the truth, the proposal of Captain Pendergast, a Protestant gentleman, and an officer bearing King William's commission, to convey him, Patrick, and his old foster-father, openly to his

residence in the North, and there give them countenance and protection: and with fresh tears the boy related the events which had prompted Pendergast to offer such an arrangement. And now the listener's reason seemed finally to be appealed to through his feelings. At the mention of Sir Redmond O'Burke's death, and of the last words between him and his foe-friend, tutor and pupil mingled their tears; and, after yielding to a long fit of grief, the clergyman looked into Pendergast's face more expressively than he had before done, and returned the friendly pressure which King William's officer meant for his reassurance.

For some minutes ensuing, his lips moved as if in prayer; then he glanced around from one to another of the persons who surrounded him, and up to the opening into the retreat, as if his mind was beginning to get back the power of making distinct observations, and comprehending the present by the past. Suddenly he started, and again growing terrified and doubtful, asked who they were who had fired shots at him when he stood in a window of the castle—"some hours before—or days—or yesterday—in the evening—or at the dawn, he was not assured which?"

Pendergast, frankly admitting that he and his attendant fired the shots alluded to, proceeded to explain that no pistol had been pointed at him. The spirit-broken and feeble-minded man shook his head, and was silent. Patrick and Rory, while John Sharpe did not vouchsafe a word, upheld Pendergast's story to be true; still he would not or, again shaken in his reasoning capabilities, could not be convinced.

"Sham friends," he muttered—"heretic friends: God pity us, God guide us;—and you are going with them, Patrick? With *them*, and to the black North? where there is neither priest nor prayers of your own? ah!" This new view of the subject seemed wholly to divert him from every other, and while he continued to rave upon it, seemed fast reducing him to utter imbecility of mind. Pendergast hastened to break up and rout the thick-coming delusions, somewhat impatient, at length, of the poor priest's unreasonable pertinacity, though still he pitied him, and as his words will show, wished to comfort him.

"Father James, since so my adopted boy calls you, listen to a few plain words from a plain man. Patrick O'Burke is meant fair, ay, fair in every particular; and in that of his religious opinions, as well as in every other. It has never entered into

my head to assail even what I must consider the prejudices of his education."

"Impure errors, superstitions, idolatries, crying blasphemies; troth, jest," emendated Sharpe.

"Be silent, John, or I will break your pate," said his master; "or more, you get no land stewardship at my hands. I am followed by a bigot fool, sir," re-addressing the priest; "only he ever says more harm and offence than he has brains, or even heart, bad as he is, to mean or feel: heed him not, but still give me your attention. This boy shall live in his father's faith, so far as I can help it; I swear it to him and to you by the word and honour of a gentleman, a soldier, and a christian; I swear it by his father's memory, and by the love and awe I bear that memory. And he shall hear his own prayers too, and say them with his own priest, if you are willing. Come with him to the North. You have been his tutor also, and he will still need your instructions; and even on this account, I say to you, come with him,"

This speech, as the speaker hoped it would have done, arrested and fixed the vague ideas of the person to whom it was addressed. After some farther conversation, he acknowledged himself convinced, and gratefully willing to accompany his beloved Patrick wherever their new patron should command. With a little entreaty, he was prevailed upon to assist in consuming the portion of supper which his unexpected awaking, and its results, had left to cool; and with an intellect considerably re-arranged, though still disposed to shake to pieces at the slightest start, he laid himself down to take a fresh sleep. All followed his example in good heart, except John Sharpe, who, as he plucked his short pipe from his tenacious and reluctant teeth, to prepare himself for slumber, uttered a groan, which, to his master's ear, protested against all the proceedings of the night, and, as it were, cried shame upon them, and appealed against them to a higher tribunal.

CHAPTER V.

A CHEERY October sun came streaming down through the open orifice, and, and the minor crannies of the half-subterranean abode, to awaken the sleepers, and bid them be up and

doing. Old Rory awoke first, and set about preparing a morning meal; his motions being less vehement than usual, out of deference to his guests, whom he would fain allow to slumber on, until they should waken of their own accord.

But the watchful habits of Captain Pendergast and his man soon broke up their sleep also; and while the priest and the boy yet slept profoundly, John Sharpe was commanded by his master to ascend the ladder, emerge into day, and look after their horses, whom John had tied to two trees the previous night.

"And move softly, John, so as not to startle our friends here," whispered Pendergast; "and if you have need to speak, let it be under your breath."

The old dragoon slowly crept up the ladder, and when his eyes came upon a level with the opening, and that he could see out over the patch of cleared ground abroad, his captain observed him stop short, and heard him mutter in great indignation.

"What's to do now, John Sharpe?" still whispering.

"More papishes," answered John; "and caught openly at their works of idolatry, troth jest; but I 'se be one among 'em."

"Come down, sir," ordered his master, as he began to quicken his strides up the ladder, "and let me understand all this; else; in breach of what may now be called the land's law, you do something to endanger as well as disgrace yourself, and me whom you serve."

Grumbling sorely, John descended accordingly, and set apart in about the middle of the den, folding his arms hard, and sucking his short pipe disapprovingly.

Pendergast gained the step of the ladder upon which he had recently stood, and looking abroad as he had done, saw a very young and handsome man, in French military attire, kneeling upon one knee beside Father James's cross of stones, and holding in his hand his broad-brimmed peaked hat, from which streamed a profuse plume of white feathers, as his lips moved seemingly in prayer. The colour of health was high on his cheeks, and his blue eyes, although somewhat controlled by the present occupation of his mind, sparkled spiritedly, perhaps rather recklessly. His own brown hair, ample as the absurd periwig of the day, and disposed like one, fell adown his back; and his dress was in the extreme of even French finery. Point-lace fringed his loosely-tied neckcloth; he wore a highly-polished breast-piece, with pauldrous, over a white satin waistcoat, of which the lower edges, and those of its great

pocket-flaps, were edged with silver; across the breast-piece came a red riband; his coat left open, and almost falling off, so liberal were its dimensions, and so wide its sleeves, was of light-blue velvet, and also embroidered; very little of a tight-fitting small-clothes could be seen, his waistcoat hung so low, and his boots, after passing the knees, came up so high, gaping widely round the thigh, although they clung closely and foppishly to the leg; and even his gloves were fine things, set off with fanciful needle-work, and deep fringe. Behind him stood two attendants, holding three horses, and wearing military uniform too, though of a more modest kind than that of their master; but they were unarmed, while he had pistols in his belt, and a gay sword at his side.

Captain Pendergast was struck with the pleasure-giving face and air of the young officer—one, as he could determine at a glance, lately in the field for King James, and wearing attire supplied to that unhappy monarch, for his Irish generals and captains, by his loving cousin, Louis of France. Looking closer at the youthful devotee, he perceived that the star of nobility glittered on the left breast of his open coat; and "Ay," concluded Pendergast; "one of the *to-be* peerages made by old Shamus, like his Sarsfield's Lucan Lordship; and now of about as much value as his brass sixpences: let the lad have the benefit of it, however, so far as he can, for me; as well as of his stock-and-stone piety, here; I'll not disturb him till his devotions be over, such as they are."

So saying, the unseen observer began to descend the ladder. He had made but a few steps, when he felt the clumsy and ill-contrived machine give way, and a second after, it fell to pieces on the bottom of the retreat, and he lay, somewhat stunned, though not hurt, beside it. The crash awoke the priest and young O'Burke, as their alarmed cries soon testified. John Sharpe, uttering a grunt, half of apprehension, half of content, at what, in his heart, he regarded as a just judgment upon his backsliding captain, prepared to stand up from his sulky position on the middle of the floor, or ground, when other voices were heard calling out, overhead, and the ensuing moment, treble consternation, wreck, and uproar, reigned around, abroad, below and above. It has been mentioned that old Rory and his youthful fellow-builder had not constructed their roof strong enough to resist an encroaching step on the outside; and now came a proof of their want of foresight; branches and boughs crackled, immediately over John Sharpe's head, and he had scarce time to look up, when, with extended

arms and sprawling legs, the young gentleman, whom he and his master had lately seen kneeling at the cross, descended upon him, and landing astride on the shoulders of the confounded Enniskillener, suddenly grappled his ankles round John's throat, and brought him to the earth. And John only waited a return of his breath to roar lustily, although his teeth still held his pipe as tight as crab's claws could have done; and to kick, and cuff, and writhe, and curse, and imprecate as furiously as if he had never called himself of the elect and regenerated, or as if his every-day prudence had not subdued, on all ordinary occasions, the sinful habit which, among many others, he was fond of laying at the doors of blaspheming papishes, exclusively. The bewildered priest, awaking amid such horrors, temporarily relapsed into all his former frightened insanity, and seconded John Sharpe with startling cries; Patrick O'Burke, losing his usual self-command, also cried aloud; Captain Pendergast, scrambling amid broken branches and boughs, and unable to see any thing, called very angrily upon his servant, to cease his vile clamour, and come to his assistance; the two attendants of the young and gallant intruder stood upon the verge of the partial chasm he had made, and joined their voices to the uproar below; and Rory Laherty, who had been struck down by the limb of a tree,—one of his own vain rafters,—and whose fire and cookery lay hidden beneath a great portion of the roof, sent up the wildest ejaculations of all, clapping his hands whenever he could free them of the many surrounding impediments.

The causer of all this confusion was the only person who made no outcry about it, and he was also the first to muster his presence of mind. John Sharpe had just uttered the words —a climax to many previous ones—"Off wi' ye from my throttle, ye unlucky papish! off wi' ye and be d—d, ye stone-worshipper, and ye house-breaker! off wi' ye, I tell ye, or, by ——! ye shall have cold lead instead of hot meat, in your bread-basket, til your break'st, the morn!" John, we say, had just uttered these words, when his rider unclasped his legs from his neck and breast, laid himself on his back, drew up his limbs till the soles of his boots rested on the shoulders of the impatient animal he had lately bestrode, and saying, in a light tone, "There, then, old psalm-twanger!" shoved John many paces forward, among the litter of the fallen roof, and then springing to his feet, continued, "God save all here, this fine morning, and peace between us! and no offence, I hope, good people,

in an intrusion that, assuredly, has been as much against my will as it can be against yours."

"And, before the Lord, you shall be taught how much against our will it *is*," threatened John Sharpe, scrambling towards the speaker, as he prepared to draw his sword; "and how much against my will you have dared tol kick me with the heels of your boots, in base requital for your first descent on my head, and my patient enduring of the same."

"Off with you, old limb of old Noll!" cried the stranger, also unsheathing his brilliant blade, "or I will send you to ask him how he likes his warm c rner—you know where."

The young man's attendants now rushed down the sides of the almost fully-exposed hollow, crying out, in Irish, that none should touch their master; Rory, enlisted as their ally by the sound of their language, joined them; the priest clasped Patrick O'Burke in his arms, and held him apart from the scene; and Captain Pendergast, still doomed to be the only peacemaker, stepped between John Sharpe and new foes.

Wrenching the old sword from his man's hand, he threatened to visit him with its flat between the shoulders, if he did not fall aside, and leave unnoticed what could only have been an accident.

"Thanks, sir," resumed the young gentleman politely, and with a dash of courtier-like breeding, moving his fine-plumed hat, which he had just picked up from among the boughs and leaves; "and you have rightly understood the matter; so that to you I am assured I need not repeat that my coming in here was unintended; although I am no way unwilling to express my sorrow for the damage I have done, and the fright I must have occasioned."

"We are content to set off your own fright against ours, sir," answered Pendergast; "seeing that, in all conscience, yours ought to be the greater; as for the damage, we can afford it passing well so long as there grow trees in the wood, and as a stag can be seen within shot in the park, hard-by."

"If that be all, then," resumed the intruder, "I shall begin to think that I merit commiseration and fair apologies for having had a pit set for my life, more than any of ye, sir, merit my excuses that I could not keep my feet from the snare:" this was said in a laughing tone; "but, faith!" he continued, in a graver mood, "I feared some one might chance to have been hurt."

"None of us say as much," resumed Pendergast, looking round; "at least I answer for myself and for my servant."

"Oh, *he* has already answered on his own account," said the stranger. John Sharpe, suddenly changing into his mood of bitter irony assented with his usual tame chuckle. "Come forward, Patrick O'Burke, and satisfy us concerning yourself and your tutor," continued Captain Pendergast.

"Patrick O'Burke? is *he* here?" demanded the young man.

"I am Patrick O'Burke," said the boy, at last disengaging himself from his anxious warden, and advancing.

"Then I embrace you, Patrick—the son of your father's friend embraces you; and though both our fathers be taken from us, that is no reason why we should not prove friends to each other; I am Philip Walsh, Baron of Crana."

"My father has often spoken of yours, indeed, Baron of Crana," said the boy, accepting and returning in a manly style the French accolade which was proffered to him.

"Ay, and mine of yours, Patrick," answered the young nobleman; "and knowing this as well as in obedience to the last wishes of the last Baron of Crana, here I came to——but, saints of Heaven! we must choose another audience-room, for this grows too hot to hold us."

Although the timber and leaves of the roof had hidden Rory's fire for a time, they had not extinguished, but rather added fresh fuel to it; in fact, the flame had now spread among the branches and boughs which the young Baron of Crana had urged down upon the red turf used by the old man for his cooking, and came bursting out, through thick smoke, with a strength that promised to extend its ravages over all the inflammable materials in the pit, as well as upon the portion of the frail roof which still wavered overhead.

All readily assented to the young Baron's suggestion of removing to a more convenient place for conversation; and it became a real scramble up the obstructed sides of the pit to the open plat which spread around from its edges, each individual of the party anxious to save himself. Arrived in the upper daylight, Rory caused a general digression from previous topics, by having recurrence to his hand-clapping system of alarm, and mourning over the destruction of the viands destined for breakfast. To supply the loss, Patrick O'Burke volunteered to hasten to the park, and shoot a buck with his cross-bow; his new friend the Baron of Crana proposed, seemingly much amused, to try his pistols upon some wood-birds; Pendergast commanded John Sharpe to follow Rory, with his carabine, to a rabbit-warren, and John acquiesced with a better grace than his master had expected, for he was hungry; and thus, in a

few moments, the group were scattered in different directions, all except Father James and his military patron; and they, setting themselves down at opposite sides of the pile of stones, awaited in silence the return of the purveying party, each full of his own thoughts.

CHAPTER VI.

After a silence of some length, Pendergast suddenly arose, stood before the priest, and asked him if the young O'Burke had hopes of succeeding to any portion of the property of his father. The clergyman, startled out of a deep and wayward reverie, looked up at his companion with all his former expression of fright and vagueness in his eyes, and made no answer. The question was repeated abruptly, and somewhat impatiently; at the same time shots sounded near, from the Baron of Crana's pistols and John Sharpe's carabine, and obviously losing consciousness of his real situation, and recollection of the recent events which had produced it, the priest shrank closer to the heap of stones, uttering feeble cries for mercy, or at the least, "for time—time! only a little time!"

Here Captain Pendergast again had to exert his ingenuity to lead back the poor man's mind from its wanderings; and, curbing his impatience with his pity, he was soon successful, or partially so. Once more the clergyman comprehended that, in the individual before him, he and his darling pupil, and old Rory, were called upon to recognise a protector: and when Pendergast a third time proposed his question—"His father's estate!" said the priest; "No, no; not a blade of glass of it is Patrick's—not a leaf of a tree."

"But the blades of grass and the trees remain, after all," urged the catechist.

"Remain not to him," persisted Father James. Pendergast alluded to the Treaty of Limerick. "We know, we know; —enjoyment of their estates to all comprehended in the treaty; —not to him; not to my dear pupil."

"Sir Redmond O'Burke's estate has been confiscated, then, under an outlawry, before his death?"

"Every sod, every bush, every stone! Ay, ay, outlawry,

outlawry! God help us! God pity us!" his terrors again began to master him.

"At this rate I have miscalculated indeed," said the Captain, only speaking to himself, as he remembered how anxiously he had before interpreted the treaty of Limerick in Patrick O'Burke's favour.

"What, what?" resumed the priest: "so disappointed, Sir Captain? The good Tipperary acres would indemnify for our housing, and feeding, and hiding: but now that you can reckon on none——"

Pendergast interrupted him sternly to set him right; and it was remarkable that his decided manner had the effect of steadying instead of scaring the reasoning faculties of his wayward friend. Perhaps the manner and language of truth and sincerity at once convinced the skeptic, at the same time that Pendergast's frowning brow, fixed eye, and authoritative voice might have had an effect usual in most cases of mental aberration.

"Wonderful to hear," resumed Father James—"wonderful to hear, and a miracle to believe; one of our taskers, and one of our masters, and one of our persecutors, takes us into his house, and keeps us, and hides us—And our chapel?—will you build us a chapel, too? or give us leave for one under the roof that is to shelter us?"

Captain Pendergast replied that, renouncing in his heart as he did, many of the observances of Popery, he could scarce think himself conscientiously free to permit, under his very roof, the performance of its ceremonies. Patrick O'Burke and his tutor might, nevertheless, find themselves uninterrupted in their religious duties at Pendergast-hall; Rory would have a little lodge in the grounds, close at hand, and they could visit him at their pleasure.

The priest seemed to understand this answer, and to be contented with it, and was growing calmer, when to give fresh excitement to his vibrating mind, the flames burst furiously out of the pit, near them, and the remnant of the deceitful roof fell in. He was, indeed, fast relapsing into mental confusion, when Patrick O'Burke appeared, leading back his purveying party, all now well laden with a supply for breakfast. But when his pupil sat by his side, and exchanged a few words with him, he seemed disposed to be happier than his friends had seen him since his visit to the den the previous night. Rony Laherty, John Sharpe, and—laughing at his task, and boasting of his

success among the wood-pigeons—the young baron of Crana, began to prepare the morning repast, and the priest looked on, much pleased. They brought brands from the edge of the burning pit to make a fire for cooking their meat, and he rubbed his hands gleeishly, and laughed in a low key, often changing his eyes from their proceedings to Patrick's face.

Presently arose Rory Laherty's usual wailings at the recollection that his wine-cellar was choked up by the burning mass of branches, reeds, and rushes. The young Baron seriously sympathized with him; but Pendergast suggested that a draught more healthy than wine, and more seemly for a morning meal, could be obtained near at hand, out of the clear bubbling spring.

"Fetch it, Rory," said Patrick, "if indeed you can find a a vessel to raise the water: but your cup is gone at last, I reckon."

"Nien, nien, nien!" answered Rory, pulling the esteemed vessel out of his great pocket, and running to the spring.

The viands were ready for eating, and Pendergast, Patrick, Philip of Crana, and the Priest sat down on the grass to partake of them; Rory, John Sharpe, and the Baron's attendants removing to some distance. The conversation of the principal party soon became interesting. Pendergast inquired if the late Baron of Crana had been "out, on the late occasions?"

"Until the Boyne affair, sir," answered the young nobleman; "and then there happened that to him which allows me this day to bear his title."

"You had an elder brother, Baron?" said Patrick.

"Yes, O'Burke; poor Roger! Hillsboro' was no success for him, though a boasted one for his cause. You will believe me, that I sorrow for Roger's death, as a brother for a brother whom he well loved; and yet his being alive now would little serve either of us except the regard of loving one another still in misfortune."

Captain Pendergast said he did not understand.

"I speak no riddles, notwithstanding, sir: had my brother Roger lived a day, an hour, a second after my father, and had the fact been known to our new keepers, he and I, and, worst of all, our only merry little sister, now sheltering in France, perhaps in Spain, were at present no more than penniless, nameless beggars on the face of the earth."—

"Like me," said Patrick O'Burke.

"— For," continued the Baron, "poor Roger, for being one of the aptest foes of William and Mary from the very beginning, was outlawed in Meath, two years ago."

"Like my father," interrupted Patrick.

"Ay, O'Burke;" young Philip, tears in his eyes, and smiles on his lips, stretched his hand to the disinherited boy, and they exchanged in silence a griping pressure.

"So that, had your father's estate, Baron," said Pendergast, "been possessed, for any the shortest time, by your outlawed brother—"

"That is," interrupted the Baron, "as I have declared before, had Roger but lived an hour after my father, without ever really possessing his estate, and no matter how remote from the country in which it lies, he must have been regarded as its owner; and it would have passed away from him, from me, from Dorcas our sister, from us and ours, for ever."

"Well; and now that a chance, which we know not whether to call lucky or ill, preserves it to you, Baron of Crana, we will hope that you feel contented with the late arrangements, by virtue of which that chance turns up in your favour," resumed Pendergast.

"Contented? ay, by St. Louis and St. Patrick! The double crown need not reckon on a better Irish subject than Philip Walsh. I have been in France, Mr. Pendergast, and there learned to enjoy life; to live while I do live, and be thankful to those who leave me the means so to do. Besides, St. Germains is in France, and I spent a day there too, and had my opportunities for reading the character of the man on whose account we have all been putting ourselves to some trouble, and running some chance of damage to the fair acres God bestowed on us, if not of peril to our precious persons also. And so, sir, a merry life of peace for me, in the hunt, on the bowling-green, and at the merry board (with something at my right hand stronger than Rory's morning draught), instead of hard knocks and short commons in the service of old Shamus."

"Heartily spoken, Baron of Crana; and in truth there is little to lament over in the loss of your late master," observed Pendergast.

"Except the losses he has caused us. But no matter; *vive la gaitè!*—that is, in English, or in Irish, rather, long life to merry fellows! ay, and *vive* little Willy too! he's no bad king to me, and if I run the hazard of making him a worse one to me, say I shall deserve the consequences. Experience, come at what age it will, makes us wise—or selfish, if you like, sir,—wise still, I say, and young as I am, I have sufficiently known the reverses of fortune to like a good prospect at the last; ay, and though I profess my disrelish of fighting, to day, have

fought enough into the bargain, to give me a title to rest at peace during the next ten years, and the next twenty, thirty, after that, if I can help it. So Mr. Pendergast—Captain Pendergast I should say—I drink to your good health, and to the most excellent welfare of their anointed Majesties King William and —— but I crave your pardon; ever I forget that we are put off with Adam's ale this cold morning."

"And your pleasant discourse makes me forget that I, and some others of this company, should be in our saddles an hour ago," said Pendergast, rising.

"That brings me to speak of my true business here," resumed the baron. "While away from you, sir, to help in providing our breakfast, Patrick O'Burke gave me to understand why we meet each other on the lands that are no longer his; therefore I do not hesitate to inform you that I, as well as you, rode hither from Limerick, to claim the acquaintance and friendship of the last O'Burke, and invite him to visit me at my castle, whither I am directly bound: and notwithstanding his story of your first right to do him a kindness, and I still have hopes that, in recollection of the love long interchanged between his father and mine, to say nothing of our agreement in certain important matters touching which you and Patrick can never hope to agree, you will waive your honourable intentions towards him, in my favour, and allow me to take the boy home to the old castle of Crana."

"Let Patrick O'Burke speak first," said Pendergast.

"I have spoken, sir," replied Patrick, "when the Baron of Crana addressed me so kindly, and we watching a buck, at the wood's edge, an hour ago."

"For or against me, Patrick?"

"For obeying the last breath of my father, and following to the world's end his *last friend*, sir."

"Thanks, my boy; though, be assured, had your opinion gone differently, it was not my purpose to allow it to part us. Mine is a trust which must not be broken. Meanwhile, I am glad, for your sake, that heaven raises you up another anxious friend in this plain-spoken and generous young nobleman; and, Patrick, entreat him to ride with us a little way north, before he revisits his own castle, and judge how he shall like the son of his father's friend at Pendergast-hall; after which entreaty, we must mount our horses, and make the most of this sun-shiny day."

The Baron of Crana could not be persuaded, however, to turn aside from his road, at the present. He had, he said, to

make order out of confusion, in his long-uninhabited house; and then he would be bound to visit his sister in Spain, where he believed she was now protected. But, yielding to Pendergast's unostentatious invitations, he consented to visit his young friend, at no distant time, under the captain's roof; and upon this understanding, all prepared for their separate journeys.

It now became a question how Patrick and the priest should be mounted: as to Rory, he regarded the want of a horse as the least possible inconvenience, cheerfully stipulating to trot on at the side of his young master. But two horses were indispensable for the pupil and tutor; and Philip of Crana insisted that those belonging to his attendants should be accepted by Patrick and the priest, while the men could follow him afoot to the nearest place where they might expect to be remounted.

"And until we can procure a horse for Rory Laherty, on our road home," said Pendergast, "you, John, will now and then give him a lift behind your saddle."

"George Walker, which is the name of my horse, given unto him in honour of the hero of Derry, will not carry double for king or deevil," answered John Sharpe. "I tried him once, yon, after the Aughram business, with a loyal mon, not to talk of a Papish, and his hinder heels flew up in the air, as if it was the very Pope of Rome he felt near his crupper."

"Then you and Rory must ride and tie, John," resumed his master; and this was said in a voice and with a look from which John understood no appeal.

"Now, Rory, go for Brann," said Patrick O'Burke, the tears springing to his eyes, as the preparations for travelling proceeded: and Rory, darting into the wood, disappeared.

"And who is Brann, Patrick?" asked Pendergast. The boy answered that Brann was the name of a dog—a young whelp, indeed, to which he was much attached. His father, he said, had taken great pains to preserve the breed of the old wolf-hound or stag-hound, of Ireland, and many of them had been about their house until the coming of King William's soldiers, when in consequence of their inveterate, and indeed, dangerous hostility to the intruders, they had all been shot—all except the whelp, Brann, who followed Patrick to the woods. "So that he is the last of his race, like his master," added the boy; "and while Rory and I hid ourselves in the hole where you passed the night, sir, we thought it well to remove Brann to a good distance, and tie him up there, lest his yelpings, if by our side, might guide enemies to our den; but

he has been well fed, and often visited during the day, and had a soft bed to lie on, and a little shed to cover him."

While Patrick spoke, his friend Brann came bounding out of the wood, followed by Rory, and jumped upon his young master with such headlong joy, that he threw him down. Captain Pendergast viewed with surprise the stature of the animal whom Patrick had described as not full grown, observing, that if Brann had yet to grow much more, he would end in being a canine giant. Patrick assured his protector that he had not attained half his size. Some moments afterward, the whole party were making way through the wood to the broad avenue, such of them as had horses leading the animals along. They gained the avenue, and all except Rory and the Baron's attendants mounted to their saddles. The cavalcade moved towards the valley by which Pendergast had approached the ruined house the night before; and now, Rory Laherty's wild cries and lamentations rang far and wide among the hills and woods. Pendergast stole a glance at Patrick. His lips were firmly closed, and he seemed to swallow the tears which only glistened in his eye. He gazed on straight before him, and would not look either to the right or to the left, nor yet turned round to catch for the last time a glimpse of his ruined home. Rory's outcries grew louder, and he bade him hold his peace.

The travellers emerged from the valley upon the wretched road which ran across its entrance. A few miles onward, they came to the spot at which the Baron of Crana was to turn off on his way to his own castle. The adieu between him and young O'Burke was warm and hearty on his part; Patrick felt it more deeply, though he spoke little. "You know which way to ride, if you want a friend, O'Burke," said the young Baron, pointing to the road he was about to take, and an instant afterward he spurred his horse over it, followed by his dismounted servants.

"And now for Pendergast-Hall, Patrick," said Pendergast; and the other travellers pushed forward in the opposite direction, Rory and Brann rivalling each other in the use of their own legs.

John Sharpe had gradually recovered from the ill-humour raised in him by his master's injunctions that he should ride-and-tie with Rory Laherty, until a horse could be procured for the old gamekeeper. The first incident which diverted him was the priest's preparations for mounting his steed. When John saw the nervous poor man tucking up his long, torn

robe, at either side, and then awkwardly, and after several failures, climbing to his saddle, he looked on with a sneering, lugubrious smile of mingled astonishment, mirth, and contempt, which now and then was farther modified by some misgivings as to the decency of the exhibition, and a confused impression that all he beheld was miserable superstition, profaneness, and a novel and curious illustration of the nastiness of the Beast of Rome. Rory's outcries and extravagance then added to his supercilious mirth; and as all at last moved forward, after parting from the young popish nobleman, whose title, star, manners, and every thing connected with him seemed utter farce in the trooper's eyes, John Sharpe, glancing from the meagre, half-bent figure of the priest, to the grotesque one of Rory Laherty, as he trotted, leading Brann at his stirrup, and then to the bare-headed, poorly-attired boy who rode beside his master, said between his teeth and his pipe, in an exceeding chuckle, "Well; get us, now, but a bear and an ape, and we are fit to make our round of all the fairs, till Midsummer; troth, jest!"

CHAPTER VII.

Pendergast halted his party a few days at Clonmel, and here some provocations to John Sharpe's irony were removed. Patrick O'Burke put off his old clothes for a suit more fitted to his condition and change of fortune; Father James was prevailed upon to substitute for his ragged serge robe, and the thread-bare appendages under it, a more ordinary dress of black; Rory Laherty became also improved in his outward man, and moreover was elevated on horseback.

Again the travellers moved rapidly forward, and reached Dublin. In this city Captain Pendergast had some friends, and he hastened to make known among them his arrival from the south, glad of an opportunity of conversing with intelligent persons upon the public topics of the day, an indulgence so long denied to him. He was anxious to find confirmed his own sanguine hopes that the late termination of the civil war was acceptable among all parties, and likely, from national unanimity, to ensure the future peace and good of Ireland. Pendergast also felt solicitous to ascertain whether or not the

temper of the times boded good or ill-luck to his adopted son, or promised well for Patrick's comfort and happiness at Pendergast-Hall.

It was upon a Sunday morning that, leaving the boy, Father James, and old Rory, to find out some place of devotion for themselves, he went out, attended by John Sharpe, proposing first to call at a friend's house, and then repair to church. His friend was at home, at breakfast, surrounded by many other gentlemen, and the visiter soon heard discussed the topics which so much interested him—but not in the way he had anticipated. To his surprise and regret, every voice was lifted up against the Treaty of Limerick, as a measure of undeserved leniency and favour to King James's adherents, and of ungrateful injustice to King William's. The speaker represented the expectation of the Protestants of Ireland to have extended to the total suppression of Popery, the total confiscation of the estates and goods of every man who had drawn a sword for James, and the conferring of such property upon those who had distinguished themselves as zealous supporters of William and Mary. And the object at which these sentiments seemed to aim, and the great hope of the malecontents, was, that the parliaments of England and of Ireland would not ratify the Treaty of Limerick, but rather yield to their remonstrances against it.

Captain Pendergast submitted, in vain, the injustice of such an expectation. He reminded his friends that the treaty was fairly the result of the formidable attitude of James's Irish partisans, and of Ginkle's perception and admission of what they had done, and what they might do. He objected to having his Roman Catholic countrymen considered as rebels for their support of a monarch to whom they had sworn allegiance, and who had never been deposed by the vote of an Irish Parliament. He exclaimed against the inconsequential reasoning which would now oppress Catholics more than they had been oppressed at the end of the reign of Charles II., merely because they were Catholics, particularly by breaking through a solemn treaty. And most of all, he expatiated upon the hope which that treaty, if acted upon, held out, to all men of just minds and cool temperaments, of the national prosperity of Ireland, promoted, in union, by her children of every creed, equally free, or very nearly so, to lend her the assistance of their talents and energies. In vain, we say, did Pendergast urge these arguments. Thirst of monopoly, sectarian rancour, and colonial jealousy, united to make his hearers deaf at

heart to his appeal; and in much sorrow, and some anger, he bade his friends good morning, and again joined by Sharpe, bent his way to the church, where, as he had been informed, the Archbishop of Meath was expected to preach, before high authorities of the land, upon the self-same subject which he had just been discussing.

John Sharpe walked behind his master with an elated step, a high head, and every now and then a heart-comforting chuckle. He had heard quite as much in the kitchen of the house they had visited, as his captain had heard in the parlour, and his soul was glad within him accordingly. "It won't do," Pendergast heard him say—"it won't do, this time: no petticoat priests cocked up a-horseback; with their knees going til scratch their ears;—ugh, ugh; no Baron-me-that, and Sir Pat-me-this, let go to canter it, and tatter it, and hell-rake it about the country—ugh, ugh."

Much inclined to turn round upon his man, and yet forbearing to notice him, Pendergast gained Christ Church. Doctor Dopping, Archbishop of Meath, mounted the pulpit, and in the face of the representatives of power in Ireland, as well as to a numerous congregation, propounded the same doctrines, touching the politics of the day, which Pendergast had heard broached in his friend's house, with this difference only, that from the mouth of the zealous dignitary they came mended in syllogistical array, in energy, and in the aids of language. The moderate-minded, though perfectly loyal and Protestant hearer, felt his grief and indignation rise stronger within him; and he at last moved to leave the church, when, in allusion to Pendergast's favourite treaty, Dr. Dopping distinctly laid down the proposition that faith was not to be kept with Papists.

Captain Pendergast looked to the form, outside the pews, upon which John Sharpe sat, in order to give his man a signal to arise and accompany him homeward. With his knees wide apart, his bony hands grasping them, his body bent forward, and a smile of the kindliest approbation, John's eyes were fixed on the preacher. In vain his master strove to catch his glance; it was immoveable. His lips, however, often moved, either unconsciously repeating words that his soul drank in like a cordial, or blessing the author of them; and sometimes they seemed to water, either in extreme delight, or perhaps as an unbidden thought of his pipe crossed his mind—his pipe, which, out of deference to the sacred roof, he had reluctantly forced from between his teeth at the church-door, and folded up in a linen rag, and put in his pocket.

After watching him a long while, Pendergast at length caught John's eye, and gave him a signal. But John, quickly reverting his regards to the Archbishop of Meath, pretended not to have noticed the occurrence, and thenceforward his master stood little chance of being honoured with a look from him. Pendergast was leaving the church alone, determined to take vengeance on his refractory servant the earliest opportunity, when the sermon ended, and, ere he could bustle through the crowd, John Sharpe joined him, his pipe in his hand, ready to be resumed the moment they should cross the threshold.

"How durst you, sirrah, disregard the sign I made you to stand up, and leave the church?" demanded Pendergast.

"The sign your honour made til me?" repeated John, as he stopped to light his touch-paper, very deliberately: "as I am a Christian man, I saw your worship make no sign til me, the morn; or if your honour did make one, and that my eyes were turned so as to see it, doubtless they were blinded from seeing any thing but that blessed man, as my ears were deaf to any sounds but the blessed words of his mouth."

"I fear you lie, John, very particularly; but home, sir, now that your nose-funnel is a-smoking; this is not the place to speak with you."

"A heavenly man!" continued John, as he strode happily after Captain Pendergast—"a light, and a burning star; troth jest! a jewel of a man;—it won't—no; it won't do with them, this time; ugh;—troth, no."

Forgetting, in his bustle to leave Dublin, his momentary dudgeon against his follower, Captain Pendergast gave orders for travelling northward that very day, and, after an early dinner, he, and all those depending upon his motives, bade adieu to the capital. His mind was saddened so much, he spoke less than usual to his young protegée. "If," he argued—"if such be the current opinions and feelings in Dublin, upon this treaty, what must I expect to find them a hundred miles farther north?"

With little adventure, our party gained Pendergast Hall, a plain but respectable square house, with wings and out-offices, well-sheltered by trees, and surrounded by fertile fields, gardens, and plantations: and during his journey from Dublin to his own home, and after his arrival there, Pendergast experienced no disappointment of his anticipations of the fervour of party hostility against the measure he would fain get all to be content with, but which few indeed considered as he did.

In these pages, as well as in others which the writers have

submitted to their readers, an endeavour has been made to guard against prejudices of country and creed, while alluding to historical events necessarily bearing upon the task in hand. Upon former occasions, whenever the words of a neutral, or even an adverse historian could be found to convey, briefly, the information required, he has spoken to the reader—and oftener, perhaps, than some readers gave him or his transcribers credit for. In the same view, some chapters back, an abstract of the Treaty of Limerick has been supplied from a well-known English historian; and now, lest we should be suspected of exaggerating the opposition to that treaty immediately after its occurrence, the same authority is here quoted, almost in continuation of the former extract:—

"The Protestant subjects of Ireland were extremely disgusted at these concessions, *made in favour of vanquished rebels*, who had exercised such acts of cruelty and rapine. They complained, that they themselves, who had suffered for their loyalty to King William, were neglected, and obliged to sit down with their losses; while their enemies, who had shed so much blood in opposing his government, were indemnified by the articles of the capitulation, and were favoured with particular indulgences. *They were dismissed with the honours of war:* they were transported, at the Government's expense, to fight against the English in foreign countries: an honourable provision was made for the Rapparees, who were professed banditti: *the Roman Catholic interest in Ireland obtained the sanction of regal authority;* attainders were overlooked, forfeitures annulled, pardons extended, and the laws set aside, in order to obtain a pacification."

Smollet adds, as a kind of answer on his own account to these angry objections, that "Ginkle had received orders to put an end to the war, at any rate."

And such were the comments upon his esteemed treaty which now assailed Captain Pendergast from every quarter, and, he foresaw, would succeed in breaking through it, and so redeliver the land to sectarian tyranny and national degradation. Such, in fact, were the comments which *did* break through it, and by which, in consequence, Ireland was made a country without a people, a province of the rule of griping colonists over millions of wretched, wretched slaves. But it is best said—and perhaps it should only have been said—such were the comments which, by leading to a breach of Ireland's "charter of civil and religious rights," and, at the same time, sharpening the already keen scent of monopoly, influenced

and prescribed the fortunes of the greater number of the individuals yet introduced to the reader, and of others who are still to be made known to him.

A few days after his arrival at home, Captain Pendergast had arranged his establishment in all its different departments. Patrick O'Burke had his chamber and his study; so had Father James; and suitable books were supplied to both. Foreseeing future discussions and difficulties, Pendergast caused Patrick to prevail on the priest to allow himself to be called Mr. James, simply, without any title indicating his clerical character; and with much difficulty the boy accomplished his allotted task, so vibrating and unsettled, so moody and wayward was still the mind of his poor tutor. John Sharpe, at peril of all he held dearest in the world, namely, his place and his master's friendship, was charged to hold his tongue regarding the incognito clergyman; and Rory also received many necessary lectures upon acting a prudent part. It should not be forgotten that the new land-steward took formal possession of his comfortable house, some distance from the principal mansion; nor that Rory Laherty established himself in the wood-hut, where he was to reign supreme over partridges, woodcocks, snipes, hares, and rabbits. And the Sunday following his day of possession, Rory was on the look-out for Father James and Patrick O'Burke, to enter his dwelling by a private approach, and the three isolated Papists enjoyed their religious observance together.

CHAPTER VIII.

Patrick O'Burke gradually improved in letters, under the secret instructions of Father James, and in manly sports and exercises, under the more open tuition of Rory Laherty, and, strange as it may seem, of John Sharpe: but of this latter fact more shall hereafter be said. It is first to be noticed, that neither his mental occupation in the house, nor his recreations out of doors, nor even the parental kindness of Pendergast, could for sometime dissipate the grave and almost stern reserve of manner which the boy brought to the abode of his protector, and which, in one so young, was sometimes disagreeable, sometimes touching, to observe. Pendergast watched

him closely, and at last believing he had discerned the cause of this unnatural gloom of mind, partially succeeded in removing it. He took an opportunity of obtaining from Patrick an admission, to the effect that he regarded himself as a poor and unentitled dependent upon the bounty of a stranger: and that not all the affection with which he was treated, nor even the last wishes of his father, could reconcile his spirit to a lot so humiliating.

"But, Patrick, this is an error," said Pendergast; for, though your father's estates be, for the present, and, according to words of law, estreated for ever from you, still I do not despair of seeing them restored, in part, at least, to your father's son:—wait but a few years till the times settle down into more assured quietness, and then judge of your chance."

Patrick's eyes brightened at this unfounded promise, which, indeed, Pendergast made only for the attainment of the amiable object he had in view: and after an instant's more serious reflection, said—"'Tis a pleasing hope, sir; yet, what prospect have we of more settled times, when, day after day, they grow worse in party hatred? When, instead of permitting the disinherited Catholic to recover the lands of his fathers, most men of your persuasion try all means to discover a bad title, as your laws call it, in the holdings of such Catholics as have hitherto escaped confiscation?"

Pendergast fully felt the truth and force of the boy's reasoning; but it was not his policy to admit that he did: on the contrary, he again found a ready answer for Patrick's doubts, who, finally, had no more to say than—"I will keep strict and honourable account, then, Mr. Pendergast, of my obligations to you, until the good day you speak of comes: and when his friend, still humouring the prejudices he wished to soothe down, for Patrick's own sake, seemingly assented to this arrangement, they parted upon a better understanding with each other than had previously been established between them, and from that day forward Patrick's brow rose, and he felt, and looked happy.

This change in his disposition, producing a corresponding change in his manner and actions, gained him friends on all hands. And now commenced John Sharpe's interest in Patrick. Hitherto, the old soldier had hated, with his habitual strength, the coldness (which to him was haughtiness) of the young O'Burke; John called it "ould, ill-flavoured, grandee-Papish pride," and turned up his nose, or laughed shortly and bitterly at it, upon all occasions. But when Patrick became

an altered person ; when he greeted John with smiles, as they met in the fields ; when with a careless good-humour, he gave him laugh for laugh, and *would* be a friend of his, cost what it might ; when he oftener took a gun in his hand, and killed more game than he used to do, and, above all, took braver leaps, over stream or hedge, upon his hunting-pole, as he coursed the hare : when all this came repeatedly under the land-steward's observation a great revolution ensued in his feelings towards his master's adopted son. At first, indeed, the revolution made little in Patrick's favour, for John's loathing only turned into indignation at what he chose to regard as audacity, as, in fact, a wanton presuming in one situated like "the ould rebel's spawn." But, by degrees, a recurrence of similar provocations to his anger, instead of confirming his dislike and testiness, won his heart, just as some ladies' hearts are said to be won ; and to his own astonishment, often muttered to himself, between the black shank of his short pipe and his teeth, as black as it, he at last found himself disposed to manifest a gruff friendship for his young tormentor.

Some accidents served to fix his liking for ever : and of these, one shall be recounted which could have produced good-will in the bosom of no other man than John Sharpe ; and another, which proved that the heart in that bosom was made of better stuff than its owner would condescend to admit, or perhaps suspected it of.

His growing inclination towards Patrick began to show itself by his meeting him and the old gamekeeper upon their sporting-excursions, and at first railing against both for some attributed lack of skill in the management of their weapons, or in their pursuit of game, and then supplying fractuous instructions for "a more christian and ecevilized method in field sports." He did not spare old Rory rebukes, severe and satirical, yet half composed of supercilious witticism, explained by his laconic laughs, upon the scandal of training up his young charge in a manner so unworthy ; and finally, he would venture to take the gun or the salmon-spear out of Rory's hands, for the purpose of showing him a wild duck or a fish might be killed, according to the best rules.

John was not always as successful as he promised to be ; but neither Rory nor Patrick noticed his failures so as to vex him. In fact, the shrewd, though almost wild old man, saw that, for the interest of his beloved foster-son, as well as of himself (or else for quietness' sake), it behooved him to live on good-terms with the land-steward, and he would not therefore

touch his vanity in any sensitive point: and Patrick too much relished John's peculiarities to deprive himself, by an open rupture, of opportunities for waggish experiments upon them, many of which he successfully attempted, with a grave face, on his own part, with the most impurturbable affectation of unconsciousness on Rory's part, and with scarce a suspicion, at the time, on John's part, of the laugh enjoyed at his expense.

One winter's day they met, as usual upon the verge of an extensive bog, to which wild-geese made an occasional visit. As Sharpe came up with the sportsmen, Patrick and Rory had just fired together at one of these birds, and missed it. John's contemptuous disapprobation was soon expressed, and calling upon them to mark the flight, and the second descent of the startled goose, he vauntingly proposed to follow it himself, and show them how to make sure of it;—nay, he engaged to hit the bird with a single ball, at any distance within a hundred and fifty yards. All eyes accordingly tracked the goose round the bog, and the place where it at length pitched. John then handed his piece, his old musket—he would use no other—to Patrick, in order that the boy's own hands might draw the charge of shot, and substitute a ball. The goose rose again, during these operations, and before Patrick had rammed the ball home, John hastened off to watch the proceedings of his marked victim, giving orders that his musket should be borne after him. So soon as he turned his back, Patrick added a double charge of powder, and along with the ball, a handful of large shot, reckoning to put the steward in for an unexpected rebound of the heavy piece, but at the same time assured that its solid and approved construction would not expose him to material danger from the unusual explosion. This done, he and Rory followed, according to orders.

They found Sharpe on his knees behind a low fence, at another point of the edge of the bog. His neck was stretched out, his eyes fixed, and, as he heard them approach, he made signs with his hands behind his back, that they should tread cautiously, and give him the musket without delay: "She's a sunning her ain sel, on yon turft," he whispered, while Patrick, creeping up to him, handed the deadly weapon; "not thinking a-bit, who's looking at her; troth, jest, no; hu, ugh!" and as he spoke, John first tapped the red tobacco in his pipe, to give it new life, and then slowly raised the piece to his left shoulder —for he was what is called left-handed, and, even in the battle field, had always presented his favourite musket in the same fashion;—"well; now for til tell her I'm here," he continued,

taking malignant aim. Patrick had stepped back, out of all possible danger; Rory had not advanced within its scope: John pulled the trigger; a report, as if from a field-piece, mingled with an imperfected scream from the goose, and a short bellow from the marksman, followed: at the same time the one was seen to spring high in air, and then fall dead, almost annihilated indeed, and the other to tumble backward, and roll into a slough. Neither Rory nor Patrick added a laugh to the mixture of jarring and horrid sounds, for the old man completely controlled much heartfelt mirth, and the author of the mischief continued to subdue his own joyous hysteric.

"'T was your master bid ye do that?" were the first distinct words they heard Sharpe utter, as he emerged, scrambling, through the white cloud of smoke in which he was enveloped; and they were not a little surprised to note that neither his speech nor tones expressed the great wrath they had prepared themselves to encounter;—"'T was your master bid you do that, Sir Paddy O'Burke?" he continued, limping towards them, his right hand tenderly rubbing his left shoulder.

"*My* master?" questioned Patrick; what mean you, John, by *my* master?"

"Troth, jest;—your master, lad," resumed Sharpe.

"Explain your words, I say, man:" Patrick's face reddened; he feared some spiteful and coarse allusion to his dependent situation;—"I am my own master, and neither have, nor will have another."

"Natheless, it was your master bid you do it til me," persisted John Sharpe, now confronting the boy close, and grinning in such a fashion into his face, that it was difficult to say whether he relished and forgave the joke, or was only nursing his anger into a high and vicious explosion.

"Who, I demand to know again?"

"His ain sel, and na ither for him," pursued John.

"Would you insult me, old John Sharpe? I tell you I own no master living!" and Patrick now spoke impatiently.

"Nien; but the one All-masther, high up," added Rory, in a pious, peace-making tone, as he pointed upwards, and pulled his foster-son's skirts to exhort him to keep his temper.

"But it wasna *He*," said John, turning his grinning face upon Rory, who drew back; "it wasna He; na, troth; it was your hopeful bairn's true master; the t'other,—and weel ye ken who;" here he pointed as emphatically downwards, twice or thrice, as Rory had pointed upwards; "the good ould di'el, ye ken; troth, jest," and John ended his tardy explanation, by

giving one of his unique laughs, to which, after assuring himself that it was really meant for good-humour, Patrick contributed a more joyous one, and even old Rory could not now command the excellent discipline of his rough and wild features. And from this hour John Sharpe openly professed himself the admirer of Patrick O'Burke. It will not be attempted to explain how ; so it was, and no more can be said.

The other occurrence which confirmed his wayward liking, was more useful to Patrick, (only so far, however, as it gave a certain determination to the old soldier's patronage,) than the mere amusing adventure just recounted : and it happened a long time afterward, when Patrick O'Burke had completed his twenty-fifth year.

Rory Laherty, in his capacity as gamekeeper, had several times represented to Mr. Pendergast, that a person from the neighbouring city was in the habit of intruding on the grounds, attended by two dogs, one a well-trained spaniel, the other a fierce and very ugly bull-bitch, and killing and carrying off whatever game he wished. Pendergast gave orders that Rory should warn the marauder to stay away. Rory complied ; but his injunctions were lightly treated ; and when he remonstrated in a higher tone, the bold stranger spoke aside to his bull-bitch, who immediately grinned like a demon, thus indicating the nature of her office on the sporting field. In fact, it was plain to be seen that the citizen carried on his war against rabbits, and birds of all kinds, under her guardianship. Nor was this the only threat put forward by her master. He uttered, at the same time, vague hints of having Rory in his power, as one in bad esteem with the laws of the land ; nay, he added, that there were some people in the house itself, (meaning Mr. Pendergast's,) who might rue the day they vexed him.

Again Rory applied to Pendergast, and that gentleman became thoughtful and cautious when he had heard the old gamekeeper's whole story. "We shall see," he said—"we shall see who this great and dangerous man is, Rory."

A few hours afterward, Mr. Pendergast rode into the city, made the necessary inquiries, and from their result concluded that, indeed, the invader of his grounds was not a person whose anger ought to be lightly roused ; nor, considering the nature of the times, and Pendergast's situation with respect to the three Roman Catholics under his protection, whose threats ought to be disregarded.

In those days, bull-baiting was a favourite and even elevated

amusement with our ancestors, although not fully enjoying the *éclat* which attached to it in times more remote. Still, it kept up, however, much of its ancient attraction for all ranks, and for both sexes, and its periodical occurrence was a kind of public fête. In most of the considerable towns of Ireland, the superintendence of the civilized sport was committed to the care of some bold, dashing young bachelor, of the trading class, called the "Mayor of Bull-ring;" (his predecessors had boasted a more sounding title—"Lord of Bull-ring;") and he had his sheriffs of bull-ring, and other attendants; and was permitted, or rather made responsible for the honour of defraying part of the expenses of the exhibition, while the guild of the town or city supplied the rest. Nay, his high office collaterally conferred upon him another trust, namely, that of "Guardian of Bachelors," as it was called; and upon the marriage of each of his wards, he invariably held a distinguished place at the thronged nuptial feast.

From this statement, it will be seen that the Mayor of Bull-ring could scarce be a very industrious individual, or one of regular or temperate habits, or in fact, of good character. Among the population of a considerable town, bachelors often changed their estate; bull-baits also were frequent; so that a due attention to the double responsibility of his office, left him little time for more useful perseverance in trade or manufacture. In truth, his whole time passed either in festivity, or in bluster-ing preparations for the sport of which he was the master, or else in superintending its actual display; or if, now and then, he had a day's leisure, the habits of his mind naturally sent him to seek recreation in some way congenial to his usual pursuits; such as the enjoyment of the bowling-green, or of the shebeen house; or, if he could afford it, (and sometimes whether he could or not,) of the sporting or the hunting field.

Now, the present Mayor of Bull-ring of the city near to Mr. Pendergast's mansion, was the person of whom Rory Laherty had so much to complain; and never had a bolder bachelor filled that ancient office. His earliest boyhood had given promise of his almost unrivalled claims to discharge its duties with spirit and effect. The only son of a wealthy glover and leather-breeches maker, he flung down, at his twelfth year, the scissors, thimble, and needle, and entered upon a most popular career, in the estimation, at least, of all "gay blades" of his own turn of mind. His fond parent, half admiring his mettle, while he openly took him to task, supplied him with money, "to keep the poor fool from starvation on the streets," as he

expressed it : in process of time, "the poor fool," not finding his father's liberality sufficient for all his own other purposes, made free with the till in the shop, and perhaps with the strong-box above-stairs, and became banished from the paternal roof. Still no decrease ensued in his round of pleasures, nay, in his means of supporting them ; and convivial souls, like himself, never suspecting him of "bad ways," only laughed heartily in approval of the genius which, by some process unknown to the vulgar, kept John Gernon's purse so well filled. True, upon many occasions previous to his unanimous election as Mayor of Bull-ring, he had disappeared from among them, and, each time, stayed weeks away, no one could surmise where, or on what business : but, although envious tongues cautiously hinted certain resolutions of the little mystery, John suffered nought in more generous and more popular opinion.

It may be surmised, that this reigning favourite of the dashing bachelors of his community boasted a form and features suited to the brave rank he held in the world, as well as to what is generally known to be one of the great requisites sought in such a public representative, elected by such constituents. This was not, however, the case. John Gernon's face was square, sallow, and almost beardless, though he had passed the age of manhood ; his eyes were unpleasing, his mouth was hard, and seldom tempered by a smile ; and as for his figure, it was low and square, and his legs were inclined to be bandy. He made up, however, in strength, for what he lacked in comeliness. John had boxed, through boyhood and manhood, every contemporary worthy of notice, and never found one who could resist the power of his shoulders and arms, or much disturb him on his well-jointed, ungraceful, bandy legs : and perhaps a chief cause for this might be found in the fact, that he had never met among them a heart and a mind so truly courageous, in an animal sense, as his own ; so impervious to a thought of yielding ; so tranquilly certain of success in any struggle for personal superiority.

And such, Mr. Pendergast ascertained, was the difficult person he had now to deal with, as an intruder upon his grounds. Other traits of John Gernon's character gave him still less satisfaction. In pretended alarm of the treasonable designs of Roman Catholics, but really for the purpose of supporting the new laws directed against them, it had become fashionable in all large towns to form, among the citizens, military companies, horse as well as foot, who, after receiving arms from the authorities, clothed themselves, and served with-

out pay, that is, mustered every Sunday for parade, and went through their evolutions as well as they knew how. Of these bands, in John Gernon's native city, one was emphatically called "The Bachelors' company," and he, of course, became its captain. Indeed, had not his other dignities, and his previously admitted excellence, made this last election a matter of course, his remarkable loyalty, and inherited dislike of "Popery, slavery, brass sixpences, and wooden shoes," would have almost ensured it. For, of the very loyal of those times, John proclaimed himself the veriest; and so minutely did he cause the administration of all his offices of power to verify the fact, that the only bachelor's feast he was ever known to decline attending, was that of a Catholic; and the only dog he ever turned out of the bull-ring, was also of Popish blood.

It was evident, therefore, to Pendergast's good sense, that of such a man he must not make an open enemy. He found, indeed, that however John's wild ways might sink him in the private estimation of the reflective and respectable, and necessarily, of those in civil authority in the city, his political zeal served to establish between him and them a good public understanding; that their ears were open to his counsel, touching matters of state-expediency, and their inflamed prejudices but too active to second any salutary hint he might afford. Of John Gernon, then, whose character and disposition would readily propose, in revenge for harsh treatment, summary persecution of the proscribed papists in his house, and whose political influence was of sufficient weight to insure the success of his measure, Pendergast determined to stand as free as possible. And in this wise view, after gaining all the information required, he rode back to his hitherto peaceful mansion.

It was his intent to warn Rory Laherty and Patrick O'Burke of the peril they were in, and to advise them to avoid all future contentions with Gernon and his ugly bull-bitch. But fate had so ordered it, that his good instructions partly came too late, and partly were doomed to be disregarded.

CHAPTER IX.

Although Father James, after his domestication in the house of his good patron, showed little of the wildness of mind which had characterized him at their first meeting; although he proved himself fully competent to the task of perfecting Patrick's education, and to the still more difficult one of concealing his own calling; it was evident, notwithstanding, that his intellects had not recovered, and scarcely ever could be expected to recover, the great shock they had received during the visit of King William's soldiers to Sir Redmond O'Burke's mansion.

This fixed though modified imbecility of the concealed priest was observable in different ways. He never left his room but at mealtimes, or, now and then, when he hurried out of the house, by a back-door, to meet Patrick in Rory Laherty's hut, for religious purposes, or to bury himself in the depths of some remarkable seclusion, that he might there read, out of his breviary, the allotted offices for the day: and, upon these occasions, he would sometimes steal on tiptoe, sometimes run through the house, as if fearing an enemy at every step, and even enter the eating-room with a start, a shrinking back, and a glowing quickness of look, which no previous experience of the friendly faces to be met there could correct or instruct.

Other proofs of his unsettled state of mind were more striking; sometimes, indeed, grotesque. Having sat down to his meal, he would eat as rapidly and as ravenously as when chance used to throw in his way a scrap of primitive food, during his lonely adventures among the hills, his eyes glancing suspiciously to either side at every mouthful. If wine was left too long near his hand, he would drink it till he became nearly intoxicated, and, in this changed and brave mood, mutter unintelligible soliloquies, which sounded like dignified threats against his foes, or smile vaguely, or laugh loudly, or sometimes start up, and attempt to say a Latin grace or chant forth a Latin hymn, until mildly interrupted by Mr. Pendergast or Patrick, and thus recalled to his usual state of caution. Connected discourse he scarcely ever attempted with his excellent friend, though often spoken to for the purpose. He never lost,

however, the most profound respect for Mr. Pendergast, from the first day he found a refuge under his roof; but it must be added that the priest's style of evincing this sentiment was extravagant, nay, absurd, as were other features of his behaviour. For example; upon no occasion would he enter or leave the eating-apartment without slowly approaching his patron, his head bent, and his hands crossed on his breast, and then making him a low, humble, and formal reverence, such as he had been in the habit of tendering to his ecclesiastical superiors: once, indeed, while absolved in the contemplation of a difficult chapter of a grand theological work which had occupied him for years, and was likely to do so to the end of his life, he momentarily yielded to the delusion that Mr. Pendergast was the bishop of his old diocese, and likely to give him a benefice in reward for his literary labours.

A sudden noise in the house, or out of doors, and particularly the report of fire-arms, would go near to reduce him to his worst former state of helpless terror; and when thus excited, his conduct and actions were enough to extort a smile from the most commiserating observer. It seemed his impulse to hurry, at once, from his book-lumbered room, in order to seek and claim the protection of his patron; and as he fled with a shuffling step down the stairs, or along the passages, broken mutterings of ejaculation or prayer escaped him, and he wrung his hands, smote his thighs, or, if very much frightened, had a fashion of cracking the joints of his fingers, which, either from peculiar formation, or long practice, made a sharp audible sound at each twist he gave them. Then, it ought to be observed, that in about a year after his experience of the good living of Pendergast Hall, and his indulgence in sedentary and even slothful habits, Father James's tall and graceless figure became, in one part, encumbered with flesh,—we mean about the region of the stomach and abdomen—his legs and thighs remaining as lank and as heavy as ever; and hence, during any sudden fit of terror, such as has last been alluded to, the vivacity of his gesticulations borrowed additional grotesqueness from the peculiarities of his shape, loosely covered as that shape was by a very plainly-cut suit of clothes, in the ridiculous fashion of the time, and as old—(for he professed himself too modest, and too saving of his patron's purse, to accept a new suit)—as the first day of his entry into Clonmel, accompanied by Pendergast, Patrick, and Rory.

About the same hour at which Pendergast rode into the neighbouring city to make inquiries concerning the ruthless destroyer of his game, Father James issued through his favourite

back-door to seek a well-known hiding-place in the grounds, in which to read his breviary. He gained the spot without molestation, although, from his glances over his shoulders, one would have thought some fearful pursuers near, and had gone through the half of his daily reading, when two shots, in quick succession, sounded very near to him, and something rattled among the leaves and branches over his head. To curb the impulse of his nervous fright was impossible. He sprang from his knees upon his feet, tossing his breviary high in the air, unconscious of the action; and with a shrill cry, ran through the surrounding bushes, he knew not or cared not in what direction. A few bounds and scrambles brought him into a space of clear ground, and he knocked himself, without seeing him, against the Mayor of Bull-ring, who stood there, leaning on his gun, his spaniel panting and crouching at his feet, and his hideously-visaged bull bitch silently displaying her tusks at his side.

"Ay?" cried John Gernon, coolly, though sternly, as if in answer to the priest's thump against him; which, it may be noticed, did not make the low-built Hercules waver a hair's breadth on his outspread bandy legs, while Father James was sent, by its rebound, staggering backwards;—"Ay, in troth! And whom have we here, this turn?"

The Priest gave no answer, but stood stuttering out the imperfect accents of fear, his protuberance much pushed forwards, and his arms convulsively pulled backwards; while John Gernon measured him with his cold, fierce eyes, and his bull-bitch continued to make her pursy black lips rise and fall over her set teeth.

"Be you the new king of birds and all game they have sent out to hinder *us*," pointing to his protectress, "from shooting a han'ful of wildfowl for the feast of the noble play of bull-bait, near at hand?" continued John.

Father James comprehended nothing of this second speech; but his staring eyes caught the motion of the speaker's hand, as he pointed to the bull-bitch, and a quick and wild association possessed his mind, as he screamed, "No, no! not by such means!—no, for Christian mercy! shoot at me again, but save me from the gnashing of her teeth!"

The Mayor of Bull-ring was puzzled. The priest's dress gave no indication of his ecclesiastical character, and why he should be thus scared, and talk in such a strain of having himself put to death, seemed strange.

"In good earnest, who be you, master?" he asked, advancing a step.

"You know—you know!" answered Father James, receding; "And you are here, hot-foot after me, with that weapon in your hand, and that imp of blood at your heels, because you know!"

"And if I do, I was told it in my sleep, man," resumed Gernon. "Hold, now! stand! we mean you no harm, by my mace and sword! Down, Maud, down," addressing the second object of the priest's aversion, as, roused by his loud words of command to his companion, she prepared to spring;—"There, she is quiet as an Easter lamb; and now, master, tell me——"

"Nothing—naught—no word, unless you stand still!" interrupted Father James.

"Here, then, still as a stone, I stand, for peace-sake;—peace is best. But tell me, I say, are you of these parts?"

"No! I give thanks to my God, no!"

"Ay? and why? Where at present do you house?

"Yonder—there—under that noble roof," pointing to Pendergast's mansion, which peeped above the trees at some distance; "There—protected by the great owner of all these wide lands, and who says there is no present law to warrant you in hunting us down, or slaying us, or banishing us!" Pendergast had never mentioned to his poor inmate, indeed, the enactments which had been levelled against persons of his religion, and particularly against its ministers, since their first meeting.

"Protected? and hunting—and slaying—and banishing?" muttered John Gernon; "now I begin to understand. Another concealed rebel! ay, and better concealed than the rest: I heard not of his being alive before this day. The great, and the noble, and the wise Pendergast tells you truly," he resumed, addressing the priest in a mild voice, for his own purposes. "No; be you Papist ten times over, or, for the matter o' that, Popish priest——"

"Priest!" again interrupted Father James; "Man, man, who spoke of priests?"

Gernon had made the allusion, still without suspecting that he parleyed with an ecclesiastic of the illegal form of worship, whatever might have been his other surmises; but this ill-judged interruption put him on the true scent; and another circumstance gave him almost proof of, in his estimation, an important and alarming fact. Simultaneously with his repeti-

tion of the word "priest," Father James vaguely remembered, for the first time since his escape from the well-screened retreat, that it was possible he might have dropped his breviary; and first feeling all his pockets, in an alarmed and hurried manner, his eyes strayed sideways towards the adjacent trees and bushes, and he timidly began to move from his place.

"Maud! watch that man!" cried Gernon, assured that the priest had lost something of which he ought not to allow him to repossess himself; and the canine familiar accordingly made a plunge between Father James and the point he was in motion to gain, and looking up into his face, fixed upon him her baneful glare, and exhibited, more amply than ever, her double rows of tusks and teeth. The ecclesiastic, returning her regards, though with a very different expression, became rooted to the spot. Gernon struck into the shade, and, after a short absence, again confronted his well-guarded prisoner. In his great horror of the bull-bitch, Father James once more forgot all about his breviary, and did not therefore look at Gernon to ascertain if he had got it in his hands. Subsequent reflection, however, hinted that the next words addressed to him by the Mayor of Bull-ring must have been grounded on a knowledge of who and what he was.

"Good day, now, holy sir," said Gernon; "for I guess enough about you. Maud! he may go his ways. Walk off to your grand house, I say, master——"

"I will; and I am thankful," assented the priest, "and the animal needs not to follow?"

"Not for the present: but look you, sir." He stepped after Father James, who, at the noise of his heavy tread, began to run. "Stop! a word more, I bid you!"

"Any thing—any thing in peace—in peace and good-will between us—'tis a noble brute—and a good house-dog—and an excellent guard to its master, I warrant;" endeavouring to look smilingly and approvingly at the object of his praise.

"Be sure of that," rejoined Gernon; "but listen. Go home to your fine house, and when you meet your friend, Miles Pendergast, you may as well not call to mind that you have met my handsome Maud on the grounds here."

"Indeed, and in truth, I will not, sir," promised the priest, earnestly and sincerely.

"Nor her master either," continued Gernon, still advancing, and fixing on him an expressive look.

"Assuredly no, genteel—and why should I?"

"Though on second thought, you may as well," pursued John Gernon—"Ay, do, do tell him all about it."

"Even as it pleases you;" the priest did not fail to take a step backward for every one that Gernon took towards him, never allowing him within arm's length.

"And you may add something to it," resumed the Mayor of Bull ring, striking the butt of his heavy fowling-piece against the ground, at which the priest jumped aside, and barely suppressed one of his usual cries, and the bull-bitch thought herself called upon to show fresh readiness for service: "Tell him from me——"

"Doubtless! of a certainty!" Gernon's deep voice rose high, and Father James was anxious, out of time, to promise obedience to any thing.

"Tell him that for young O'Burke's sake—and for his own sake—ay, and for *your* own sake——"

"I will, I will, by word and troth, I will!"

"Be silent, fool! and hear, first, what you are so over anxious to engage for: keep your place, and listen, I say!—Hush!" A shot at some distance interrupted the speaker, and quite deprived the priest of self-command. At the risk of death in more than one frightful shape, he uttered the shrill cries he had just before scarcely controlled, and once more turned his back and fled.

But Gernon did not think proper to molest him farther. "No, Maud, you beauty!" he said, in his gentlest tones, to the loathsome animal, who waited but a signal to pursue the fugitive, and bring him back by the neck;—"No, dearee, he's not worth the trouble: let us see what new comer we are to have on our hands; and do you get to heel, Maud, to heel, and take no notice till I bid you."

As he spoke, he looked down a narrow and faintly-traced path, which ran zig-zag into more remote parts of the grounds, and saw a youth advancing towards him with a gun on his shoulder. It was Patrick O'Burke.

"Oh; oho! Paddy Papish is out a-sporting to-day, as well as ourselves, Maud," he continued: "that brave shot was his, pet; and if I don't greatly mistake he heard that mad priest's screech too, and is mighty angry about it. Well, well; God help us, this time, at any rate, Maud."

Patrick's appearance gave cause for Gernon's suspicions. His brows were knitted, his eyes kindled, and his face red, as he came near; and he stepped to meet the intruder on his patron's grounds, haughtily and indignantly. Hitherto, he had

not happened to have been with Rory Laherty upon any of the rencounters between the old gamekeeper and the Mayor of Bullring; nay, owing to Rory's caution of permitting his foster-son to become embroiled with the dangerous stranger, it was but that very morning Patrick had for the first time learned any thing of the matter.

"My service to you, sir," he said stepping a few paces from Gernon, who awaited his approach, resting on his piece, and whistling in a low cadence, as he looked in another direction.

"And mine to you, sir," he was answered.

"What injury have you done upon the gentleman who just parted from you?" continued Patrick.

"Gentleman?" repeated Gernon, measuring him with a deliberate glance from head to foot;—"I can't tell who you mean by 'gentleman,' young master; but I do not care if you know that the mad creature who left my side, a moment ago, has undergone no injury from me."

Patrick, recollecting the peculiarities of his poor tutor, and his aptness to cry out upon slight occasions, was reasonable enough, in his heated mood, to give credit to this answer. He soon found another subject for talking on, however.

"You came here to speak on business with Mr. Pendergast, friend?"

"No, friend." Gernon continued his low whistle.

"With some of his establishment, then?"

"I know not any of them; and on that head wish to remain as wise as I am."

"But our gamekeeper Rory Laherty, is not quite unknown to you?"

"A passing acquaintanceship, merely."

"Briefly; what do you here, sir?"

"As briefly—who is it that asks?"

"The O'Burke, and on Mr. Pendergast's account: so, tell your errand now:—answer my question."

"Perhaps—if you answer one of mine first."

"Let me hear it:" Patrick also rested on his piece. "Where did your worship attend to hear lawful prayers the last Sabbath-day?"

"Impertinent fellow!" cried Patrick, haughtily.

"Impertinent? and fellow? Bother. Show me, and shortly too, that you went to church last Sunday—ay, and the Sundays before it, for as many months as we can count, or pay me twelve-pence current money of the realm, in satisfaction

for every Sabbath day's worship you have missed; such being the fine by law established upon stayers-away from God's service, and loose livers in this pious land."

"You shall not tempt me, by your rudeness, fellow, to forget who I am, whoever *you* may be," said Patrick: "but again I demand to know what is your business here?"

"Sport—not business," answered Gernon.

"And, what kind of sport?"

"Such as fills—this," continued Gernon, touching the already half-filled leathern bag which hung from his shoulders.

"With whose permission, friend?"

"Mine own," replied Gernon, coolly filling a small tin measure with brandy from a wicker cased bottle which he drew out of his pocket:—"'Tis a hot day enough, for a September day: will you please to taste?" offering the measure.

"I thank you, no: but it remains for me to tell you, that you must henceforth have Mr. Pendergast's leave, as well as your own, to kill his birds, and other game, on these grounds."

"Oh, not at all: see, for example;" he put his piece suddenly to his shoulder, as a small flock of wood-quests flew over his head, fired, and brought down two of the birds;—"Fetch me them, Maud, dearee," he continued, and Maud flew to obey his command.

Patrick lost all patience at this imperturbable insolence. "The ugly brute shall never take them off the grounds!" he cried.

"To be sure, no—but I will for her," said Gernon, pacing to meet the bitch.

"Nor you, either, by heavens!" Patrick sprang before him, turned round and presented his piece.

"Hollo?" questioned Gernon, staring at him.

"Mind me, fellow," rejoined Patrick; "your shot is gone, I have mine to the good, so take care what you attempt to do."

"Oh, brave! brave!" exclaimed the other scoffingly; and the words were scarcely spoken, when, flinging down his own piece, he jumped head-foremost upon Patrick, and with one twist of his arms possessed himself of his: "Stop, now, Maud! stop! I don't want your help this time; only keep an eye on the lad to hinder him and me from any more scuffling: 'tis a pretty sporting-piece," curiously eyeing his prize; "and luck is in my road, this morning, to make my own of it."

"You are robber as well as poacher, then?" asked Patrick, whose wrath and courage united, though both of the most posi-

tive kind, did not prompt him to an immediate continuance of hostilities, under the circumstances.

"It can hardly be called poaching," answered Gernon, "to provide a matter of a few dozen of birds for the good bull-feast to-morrow; or robbery, to disarm a concealed Papist, under authority of the Act of Parliament of the last year, in that case made and provided."

"Put back the O'Burke's gun in hand, and quit grounds!" here interrupted old Rory Laherty, suddenly arriving on the scene, close by the disputants: he was also armed.

"Skirt him, beauty!" exclaimed Gernon, as, with the rapidity and certainty of thought, he wheeled round upon Rory, the old man knew not what was doing, when he found himself without his piece, and at the same moment felt Maud tugging his ample skirts, in obedience to her master's orders.

"I must soon press a baggage wain in the King's service, at this rate," pursued Gernon, "to carry Papists' arms to the Royal stores, yon," pointing towards the town: "and now steady young O," to Patrick, who again seemed to meditate an attack,—"I will shoot you as I would shoot a Papish rabbit, if you budge an inch—as for your gamekeeper (so called, but that's to be looked to, yet), Maud can manage him."

"Maybe not," said Patrick: then he addressed Rory in Irish; "Is he at hand?"

"Within a whistle," replied Rory: "and upon the wind."—"Brann! Brann!" cried Patrick; and Brann, our former acquaintance, now grown into the giant which Pendergast had predicted he would be, came galloping out of a near cover. The instant the animal saw how matters stood, his heavy ears, previously cocked, fell low, his eyes glared like live coals, his bristly coat grew rough, and he redoubled his speed to join his friends. At the same moment, still another power appeared in view, in a contrary direction, namely, John Sharpe, his old musket resting on his arm, and his—(need it be said?)—inch-long pipe between his teeth.

"Look to yourself, Maud! a shot a-piece for the Papists, and look to yourself!" Thus Gernon expressed his arrangements for his changed position, holding a piece in either hand, and pointing one at Rory and the other at Patrick. And promptly taking his hint, Maud freed Rory's skirts, and faced round to reconnoitre her more formidable enemy. "This is all fair," continued Gernon; "all fair, and prime sport;" the fraptious tones of John Sharpe reached him from a distance, demanding, in his own idioms, the meaning of the scene be-

fore him, and bidding every human being, and the dogs too, be quite still until his closer approach; but after a hasty glance at him, Gernon proceeded as if he were not in existence. "I have heard tell of your Papish joyant of a dog, Master big O, and long wished to make him and my little beauty better friends; now they are like to be in for it: so, we have nothing to do but look on, and show them fair play—Wait for him, Maud! wait for him!" Brann yet wanted about one hundred yards of the ground occupied by his adversary, who, even anticipating her master's advice, coolly though ferociously awaited his attack. John Sharpe, seeing his all-powerful commands made light of, redoubled his exhortations in the other direction, raised his voice to a cracked scream, presented his musket with the left arm, shook his right fist, and at last, in an effort to run forward, fell.

At this instant Brann came within a bound of Maud, and, perhaps in deference to the beauty's sex, suddenly stopped short. Feeling no such scruples with respect to him, she was fast in his throat, in requital for his gallantry, before he seemed well aware of her intent. At the first consciousness of assault, or of pain, the noble brute chucked his head backward and forward, but in vain; Maud held him firm. The great strength of his neck and shoulders was sufficient to raise her clear off the ground, and he often did so, but still to no purpose; and and in a short time, self-exhausted by his own struggles, as much as he was enfeebled by loss of blood, and agitated by pain, he submitted for a moment to the advantage she had gained over him, lowering his head, so as to permit her to tug hard, and uttering short and broken barks, while she did not suffer a sound to escape her.

"The bit will be out the next tug or so if he gives up that way," observed Gernon; while Patrick and Rory looked on, utterly astonished and grieved at this inconceivable discomfiture of their boasted Irish stag-hound: "But stop; what 's in his head, now?" continued the Mayor of Bull-ring.

Of a sudden, Brann resumed his struggles to shake off his deadly foe. Then he jumped backward, and dragged her with him; her dangerous tugging being now ended, and her whole strength exerted to cling close, and keep her gripe. They went back many paces from the spot on which had commenced the fight, Maud still dragged or tossed at the will of her captive. "He wants to get her into the water, the born devil!" cried Gernon; and he had scarcely spoken, when Brann confirmed his surmise, by slipping into a small, but deep pool,

which he had gradually approached, and forcing the bitch with him. They sunk; they quickly rose again; Brann now above Maud, but Maud's tusks still in his throat, while the water grew tinted with his pure Milesian blood.

"And now he wants to drown her!" continued Gernon, observing that, indeed, Brann, easily remaining uppermost in the new element, as well by virtue of his superior strength, as by his skill in swimming, struck Maud repeatedly with his heavy paws, and almost plunged his nose under water, to keep her from breathing a mouthful of air. "Well! if the ould soul of cunning Papistry be not in the body of that Papish brute, my name 's not John Gernon! Draw dogs, Master Patrick, draw dogs! I consent to have it called a drawn-battle, till some other day. Help me, man, I say, or else the to-morrow's bull may wear his garland home to his stall!" and so saying, he discharged both the loaded pieces which he had hitherto held in his hands, evidently as a precaution against an attack upon himself by their owners, Rory and Patrick; and then, flinging them on the bank of the pool, jumped into the water. Patrick followed his example, more out of anxiety for Brann's oozing wound, than for the life of Maud; and both swam, or waded breast or knee high, according to the varying nature of the ground at the bottom of the pool, round their dogs. The bitch's teeth were now easily disengaged from her adversary's throat, for, in fact, she was half drowned, and sense and muscular power began to decrease together. "Take him with you, to the mass, if you like, a' God's name! and land him at your own side, there," exhorted Gernon, when they had parted the animals, and each seized his own by the neck. "I will tow Maud to the t'other side, and I can but say, Master Patrick, let him meet her again on some fit ground, where there are no back-doors, in the shape of puddled water, for Papish cowardice to be the better of, and then——"

"And then? and what then, ye limb o' the deevil?" interrupted John Sharpe; who, unobserved by Gernon or Patrick, had now gained the pool's edge, his wrath at its height, in consequence of his disgraceful fall. "So, Johnny Gernon, it is you—ah, you mother's blessing! ah, you father's pride! ah, you pet-bird!" all the while that Sharpe spoke these soft epithets, meant inversely from their apparent meaning, he grinned in his bitterest fashion,—"Well might I give a guess til you, a langer step off; and so here you are, Johnny?"

"Here I am," answered Gernon, not yet quite landed.

"Yes; ay, to be sure; and what good work have ye been

at, ye sweet nut? (deevil crack ye!) what put these twa sporting-pieces in your hands, forbye your ain, there?" John Sharpe took up the weapons, ere Gernon could prevent him; but he said,

"Leave them where you found them, old John; they are mine, by right of law."

"Leave them where I found them? maybe I will; and why not? Yours by right of law, dearee? what law, pet?"

"The good law that empowers all loyal subjects of the King to disarm all Papists, wherever and whenever they shall be found armed;" and short explanations from Patrick and Rory farther supplied the land-steward with the necessary accounts of what had happened before he came up.

"Ay, to be sure!" he then continued; "oh, doubtless; and all because the Mayor of Bull-ring says it; certain—ly! Here, Master Patrick! here, gamekeeper!" he cried, suddenly flinging the pieces behind him, in such a direction that they could be promptly seized by their former proprietors, and they were so. "Prime and load!" he continued, presenting his own musket at Gernon; "ay, and slip in a ball each, if they are handy: my ain ould never-fail has one a few inches aboon her breech, already; she has so, Johnny Gernon; and now, mind an old soger;" here he put his foot on Gernon's piece, which lay on the ground since its master's plunge into the pool;—"nathless that you are Mayor of Bull-ring, you—where the horned deevil is, and hath taken up his abode by the side o' your ain sel—as sure as he is in anither place, and at the side of his dearee of a mother; and nathless that you are King of all Bachelors—ay, and called captain of figs'-ends, and tailors' geese, and leather-parings, and wax-ends, Johnny—yet, Johnny, pet, ye will be moving from the place you stand, afore I bid ye twice over; you, and that ugly brute at your knee,—ugly enough to make her own bairns strike her,—troth, ye will, Johnny! and have a care how ye come rieving and plundering to our grounds, again, honey, so ye will: troth, jest, now, Johnny."

"Sharpe, do you have a care what you are for doing," said Gernon, in reply to this long exhortation: "I tell you, quietly, over again, the arms are forfeit to the law, being illegally carried by concealed Papists; and——"

"To be sure," interrupted John Sharpe; "only, who tould you, Johnny, that we are Papists here?—and they are to be seized by all loyal men; and who tould ye that you were such, dearee?"

"The lad will not deny his calling," answered Gernon.

"Wont he? how do you know, pet? And, supposing he doesn't, how does *he* know what is his calling? Does he know, this moment, if he ever had so much as a father? Tell me that;" Patrick did not feel complimented, although, in his own way, John Sharpe meant him well.

"As to *my* loyalty, old Sharpe, you shall get some proof of it, yourself, maybe," resumed Gernon.

"And may be so; why not? well to get any thing, these times: or, if not, obliged til you, Johnny, all the same, ye ken; only, now your absence would be good company; and there's the second time I tould ye so; troth, jest."

"The law has a word to say to fosterers of Papists, as well as to Papists themselves," retorted Gernon, stooping as if to wind round his wrist the cord by which he held his bitch secured: Patrick held Brann also in a leash—"Give me my own piece!" he cried, suddenly springing towards it: his foot slipped.

"Back, mon!" roared John Sharpe; "back, first, and forward, after; or, by the pipe between my teeth, I'll shoot you as dead as your great-grandfather—a body ye seldom heard o', I reckon!—Cover him!" he continued, addressing Patrick and Rory, of whom the latter only stood with a loaded piece; Patrick had disdained to arm himself in such a contest. "Never mistak' me, Johnny; I ken what I am about as well as ye can tell me: here am I, land-steward, and under orders from his honour, my master, as also is the gamekeeper at my back, to keep you, and such as you, from trespass upon our grounds; and because ye have trespassed, over and again, 'tis *your* piece is the forfeit to us, mon; and because it is a forfeit, we 'll keep it, as sure as gunsmith made it: and so, for the thard time, jest, march, dearee—no disgrace to ye to retreat before odds, ye ken, wherefore ne'er look shamefaced about it—only march, march, pet, nathless."

With a baffled grin Gernon had been gradually moving along the main path towards a private entrance into the grounds, and now he walked on briskly, after glancing one look upon Sharpe, and saying, "'Tis a long lane has no turning, ould acquaintance."

Seeing that Patrick remained behind inactive, while Sharpe and Rory followed him with presented piece,—"Another day for the dogs, Master big O!" he shouted.

"As you will," answered Patrick; "any day; to-morrow, if you please, after the bull-bait."

"No, not to-morrow; nor would I advise you or your Irish jovant to come to our bull-bait, young sir;" and he turned out of sight.

"Gi' us a hand, lad," said John Sharpe, returning after he had seen the intruder out of the grounds; "Papist or no Papist, we know you ower long til stand by and see you wronged by a bull-necked scapegrace like yon."

"I thank you, John." Patrick wrung the old man's hands, while tears, more bitter than sweet, filled his eyes. And thus is given, as was promised, the circumstances which produced John's second and most positive declaration of friendship towards Patrick O'Burke; and as Mr. Pendergast had not yet returned from the city, it is thus also explained how that gentleman's proposed caution of John Gernon was rendered unavailing. When he did come home, and was made acquainted with the fresh broil between him and his young friend and dependents, Pendergast exerted all his powers of persuasion to keep Patrick from future rencounters with the city bully; and now, as was farther premised, he was doomed to be disregarded; for in his heart, in consequence of Gernon's parting threat, Patrick had said, "To the bull-bait to-morrow I will go;" and he was sufficiently obstinate, if not ungrateful, to hold by his resolution.

CHAPTER X.

At an early hour next morning, the neighbouring city gave abundant indications of the public sport and festivity which were expected to take place within its walls. Its inhabitants, of the middle and lower classes, appeared in their holyday clothes, standing at their shop doors, or outside their stalls, or grouped in the streets, all discussing gleeishly the one engrossed topic. Among them might be seen the owners of the dogs destined to death or glory in the bull-ring, each with his important animal in leash, lest he might waste his strength in skirmishing with a rival, or encounter injury by being permitted to roam at large. Of these persons many were butchers, or butchers' boys; and they generally kept up the most esteemed breed of dogs, and had them always in readiness for combat, because, the year round, they exercised the

ferocious habits of the animals by making them guardians of their shambles, otherwise much exposed and unprotected, and moreover, could afford to feed them on the diet best calculated to excite their courage and spirit. But the competition for bull-baiting fame was not confined to the city. From the suburbs, and even from remote hamlets and villages, young farmers, or young peasants, led in their fierce watch-dogs, to try their chance in the ring, under the eye of the mayor and his critical judges. These latter-mentioned canine warriors were not highly prized, however, as they seldom had in their veins the true blood for the sport, being either mastiffs, or half-mastiff and half bull-dog, or else quite degraded by a descent from the Milesian family of Brann. It is not meant by this that they lacked courage or strength in attacking the bull, or evinced more care of their limbs and lives than did their superior brethren: a want of method was the chief crime laid to their charge; connoisseurs said they did not "fight fair;" which perhaps meant, after all, little more than that they did not display precisely the same tactics as those practised by the peculiar breed of animal which was arbitrarily said to be best fitted by nature for the perilous game in question. Such as the rustic candidates for distinction were, however, they invaded the streets of the city in great numbers, they and their masters and seconders, male and female, adding considerably to the noise and bustle of the holiday scene; while bells jingled in the church-steeple, boys and children shouted, and the venerable bellman of the guild went his rounds, proclaiming in an authoritative though quavering voice, orders issued by the civic powers for the maintaining good order; the passive man submitting without a murmur to the gibes and laughter of his own particular crowd of tiny persecutors, who accompanied him wherever he moved, and from the cock of his old hat, down to the tarnished buckles of his square-toed shoes, omitted nothing worthy of their satire.

At about ten o'clock, the place allotted for the day's sport began to be occupied.

In the middle of the town, at the widest end of the widest street, stood the market-cross. This was a piece of solid mason-work, shaped according to its name, some twenty feet high, and having a substantial pedestal. As may be concluded, it was the work of more Catholic times, and it had been invented for purposes of business and piety, conjointly. During public processions of the clergy and the people, such as were made at Pentecost, mass used to be celebrated before

it; and thus, considered together with the great event of which it was a symbol, and the rude sculpturings of saints and angels inflicted on its front, the market-cross served to create devout associations in the minds of the people. Its character so far established, it then asserted its influence over their traffic. In remote and loosely-organized times, the buyer in the market which used to assemble in the open space around it, had commonly to apprehend that the article he wished to purchase either was of a bad quality, contrived to look well, or had been stolen by the vender; hence arose the necessity for his receiving some solemn voucher of the goodness of the commodity, or of its having been honestly come by: and in the absence of other forms, or of the means of obtaining them, he was satisfied if the suspected seller stepped up to the cross, and uncovering his head, and laying his hand upon it, swore to the facts required.

Such had been the ancient sway of the market-cross now pointed out to notice: but the growth of wholesome laws and arrangements to regulate buying and selling, as well as the change in religion, had, long before the day of the bull-bait, which many are about to witness, quite deprived it of its primitive vocation. Excessive zeal had even shattered it, here and there, for the purpose of exterminating the ugly visages of holy men, and the bloated cheeks and goose-wings of the little celestials which were chiselled, very barbarously, as has been hinted, upon part of its surface. And, in fact, the sole or most important service at present required of the market-cross, was, that it should securely hold the great iron-ring, which was to hold the rope, which was to hold the bull destined to be baited for the amusement of a more enlightened generation.

The space round what we may now call the bull-stake, was rudely barricaded at every side; and, at two sides, very near to the shop-doors and stalls of the street, which were shut up, or otherwise secured, to keep off the pressure of the throng. Behind the barrier, where it crossed the street, and confronted the stake, rough seats of unplained planks had been constructed, rising one above the other, for the accommodation of such persons of condition as could not obtain places in the windows of the houses, at either hand. Immediately under the front row of these seats, was a small enclosure, within the great one, where sat an official person, with a book on his knee, and a pen and ink in his hand. It was his business to write down, before the commencement of the sport, the names of all persons who proposed to set their dogs against the bull,

which process he called "entering the dogs;" and he was bound to close his book a full hour clear of the time for slipping the first dog, in order to limit the number of aspirants for fame, preserve order, and ascertain who failed and who succeeded during the hurry and interest of the game. After he declined to inscribe a name on his important page, no man could, that day, present himself for a chance of glory.

In the angle of the barrier, to the right of this seat of office, arose the throne of the Mayor of Bull-ring, with lower places for his two sheriffs, and standing room for his inferior attendants; a second small enclosure of stakes and boards being thrown up around all, to guard against possible dangers from the bull breaking his rope, or pulling the ring out of the Market-cross, or, perhaps, pulling down the cross itself.

It has been said that, about ten o'clock, this scene of the approaching entertainment began to be filled. Already, indeed, the lowest of the populace were crushing each other almost to death outside the great barriers, and the windows of the houses of the street, from the first floors to the attics and sky-lights, as well as the tops of such as happened to have parapets, became alive with more respectable spectators. The rising seats, over the secretary's enclosure—for secretary we now call the man with the book—were not, however, as yet so much thronged, for the reason that men, appointed for the purpose, kept them only for such genteel visiters as might come in a hurry, and be willing to pay a handsome price for admission.

The secretary's work was nearly done; one by one, the last of the candidates who were ready to present themselves within the allotted time, jumped over the palings of the larger barrier, followed by their dogs, and ushered forward, and, indeed, permitted to make their jump, by two officials, with ornamented staves in hand; and one by one they were introduced at another spring, to the solemn office of the registry; and after having paid him a small fee, and seen him make some marks in his book, which they believed to be the letters of their names, one by one they vaulted back again, and took their standing-places, as best they might, among the rabble, outside the bull-ring.

But, neither the bull, nor the Mayor of Bull-ring, had yet appeared, and many anxious eyes looked out for their approach. A stir, and loud voices down the street, in the direction whence the latter-mentioned individual was expected to come, in procession, to his throne, seemed at last to promise that popular impatience and curiosity were about to be gratified. The

jesting, jibing, and loud laughter and exclamation which had previously arisen from the crowd subsided into silence, or into whisperings, and the glances of all turned to the tiers of seats above the secretary's stool ; for, by a narrow private passage, which flanked those seats, it was known that the master of the sports would enter the ring to gain his place of dignity.

Few eyes could penetrate down the street ; but the bustle drew nearer ; and presently, instead of the Mayor and his state emerging from the private passage, the fat proprietor of the head inn suddenly appeared on the highest and most remote of the seats, his head bare, and puffing and blowing from unusual exertion, while he said in a loud though hoarse voice—

"Genteels! neighbours, and all good lads! here be a great man, from foreign parts, and along with him two ladies of his family, who having just put up at the King's Arms (a proof of his loyalty and fair intentions), and heard of the noble sport about to be proceeded in, are in need of a convenient place for the day ; wherefore I, Kit Holmes, crave for him and his fair dames, in the name of courtesy and hospitality, and in my own name, and in the name of the King's Arms, that you accommodate him with one upon the moment ; and well I know, the best you have, he shall have,—ay, your best of the best—your place of honour for the strangers!"

The professional zeal mixed up with this speech did not escape the keen perceptions of the crowd, and "Bravo, Kit!" was loudly shouted in mockery of the inn-keeper, at the same time that no delay occurred, particularly among the more respectable people already in possession of some of the important rough planks, in answering his eloquent appeal. A party who sat in the very front row, directly over the Secretary's box, immediately arose, and vacated their places in favour of Kit Holmes's "great man from foreign parts, and the two ladies of his family:" and so soon as Kit had paid gracious thanks for what he chose to monopolize as a personal compliment, he turned his back upon the ring, and bowed profoundly to some one under him, who, it would seem, stood in the street. The next moment the trio, in whose cause he had been so energetic, appeared before the curious multitude.

First came, springing from plank to plank, a gentleman, certainly of some consideration, tall and well made, and answering, in his attire, to the inn-keeper's promise of his being "from foreign parts:" of his features, the people could scarcely judge, as his low-flapping hat, and the standing collar of his travelling cloak, were arranged so as almost wholly to

disguise them. When he had about half ascended the seats, he paused, turned round, and extended his arm and hand; and promptly responding to his offer of service, a comely young lady, of eighteen or nineteeen, also wearing a dress different from the fashions at present around her bounded up the plank as spiritedly as he had done, though more gracefully, took his hand first and next his arm, and then both faced the audience, and smiling and laughing, as they spoke to each other in strange language, continued their way, ushered by Kit Holmes, down to the place of honour which had been prepared for them. Before they stepped into it, however, they stopped short, looked behind them, and the young lady raised one of her fingers in earnest appeal to her companion, upon which he assisted her hastily into her seat, and then hurried back the way he had come. The spectators, anxiously watching for his re-appearance, saw him, in a few minutes, leading by the hand another lady, very young, very low and slight, but of a childishly reserved deportment, habited in attire of a grave colour, and having a decidedly foreign face, of which the tint was very dark, the nose long and somewhat hooked, the lips tiny, though well formed, the forehead strikingly high, and the eyes deep black, round, observant, indeed, almost restless. She did not spring forward as her friend had done, but stepped firmly, and it seemed, haughtily; nor did she laugh or smile, nor cling close to her guide, but barely touching his hand, suffered him to lead her. Once or twice he stooped his head and whispered something to her, which, from his manner, seemed meant for her amusement; but no pleasant lines played about her mouth, and she only looked up at him with eyes full of serious if not impassioned meaning.

They gained their seats. The good-humoured young lady rose to receive her friend, and it seemed by her intentness as she spoke, by her conciliating smiles, and by her pointing backward, that perhaps she made excuses for having left her grave companion behind. But if such was the case, her amiable apologies did not appear to be received in the spirit in which they were offered; for the person whom she addressed only bowed with an air half humble, half offended, and sighing deeply, then awaited her time to sit down; that is, remained standing till her fair companion had become seated.

When all had settled themselves in their places, the gentleman dividing the two ladies, they could not long remain unaware that they attracted the full attention of the crowd assembled around them: in fact, every eye was fixed upon the stran-

gers, and they must have even overheard some of the many conjectures as to who and what they were, as well as remarks upon their attire, persons, and features, which rather freely escaped the common people who stood without the barriers ; and the three young visiters bore this by no means pleasant notoriety each in a different way. The gentleman, turned sideways, his hat and cloak-collar now completely hiding his face, leaned his elbow on the edge of the enclosure, in contact with which he sat, and spoke in a low tone, now to one lady, now to the other. His black-eyed charge, when she first observed the stare of the crowd, drew a thick veil over her face, and afterward shifted her position, in evident impatience ; but her contrast—for contrast she was, being of a good height, and of a full, almost a jolly figure ; and having fair skin and fair hair, blue eyes, a straight nose, nearly meriting to be called short, and just redeemed from a turn-up ; a little narrow mouth, but the lips so rich, that when they closed, which was seldom, they almost made a circle ; a round, large chin, which promised to be double not long after she should become a matron ; and round cheeks, really rose-red, and deeply-dimpled ; this happy-looking creature took the admiration of the good people in a very different spirit. She, also, had a veil, but instead of lowering it, she put it quite up, throwing it gracefully, though a little daringly, over her head-dress, and then she sent her laughing, satirical blue eyes over the whole assembly, at first as gravely as she could, but finally allowing them to dance, and glitter, and half close in smiles, while with perfect self-command, and perhaps some contempt, she seemed to select for critical remark to her companions individuals of the motley throng.

This did not escape the notice of the causers of her mirth ; and in consequence, although upon her first brilliant appearance among them she had the effect of a suddenly-unclouded sky of a dull day, they began to take umbrage, and to vote her bearing and conduct audacious, vulgar, unfeminine. The passionate ill-humour of the lesser lady had already offended them. And in the manner of the gentleman, also, they thought they saw additional grounds for being angry ; for, though he still contrived to conceal his face, it seemed, that whenever his laughing companion turned to convey to his ear the result of a new observation, he stooped his head to laugh with her, and thus encouraged her in making little of the company around her ; an ungrateful return, to say the least, for the ready politeness shown to the new-comers.

The grave or scowling faces of the assembly soon evinced the feelings which began to rise in their breasts, and which they now encouraged by communicating to each other. Presently they found words to retort upon their provoking critic and her party, the glances and dumb-show with which she vexed them. "Trollops,—not ladies!" cried some. "No gentleman, wherever he comes from!" said others. "Randall Oge O'Hagan, with two of his mesdamoiselles, maybe, come in disguise among honest people, to see who is best worth overtaking on the road home!" proclaimed a country-looking man. He pronounced, in this accusation, the name of a notorious freebooter, one of the captains or chiefs, as was supposed, of the Rapparee bands, who had aided King James in the late Civil war, and who, after the termination of hostilities, continued to exist, as common highway-men, in the otherwise peaceful country of Ireland. And Randall Oge O'Hagan was so celebrated, if not admired, for his masquerading talents upon many occasions, that this hint took well, and was caught up and re-echoed by the crowd, bitterly, and with various modifications. The speaker himself drew some of the attention of his audience. He stood close outside the barrier, wearing, as has been indicated, a peasant's dress, and obviously a candidate for the honour of slipping at the bull a large mastiff, whose nose peeped over the planks at his master's side; and so far there was nothing remarkable in the man. His great stature, however, rising above the heads of the throng behind him, and at either hand, as he sturdily folded his arms across his breast, became the admiration of many; and the women of the mob praised his handsome face; for, notwithstanding its certain expression of daringness, it was composed of a fine, open, tranquil forehead, a Roman nose, smiling eyes and mouth, and a beautiful projecting chin, all of the largest order.

The people were not sure that the strangers understood the language in which these reproaches had been addressed to them, and, indeed, their subsequent conduct seemed to prove that they did not. For in nothing did they evince an improved sense of respect for their company, or a consciousness of having been uncivilly or insultingly accosted; and the cries of the assembly now assumed a menacing tone, many voices calling out to have the intruders dragged back from the conspicuous and honourable place they were thought unworthy to occupy, when a new event riveted the attention and interest of the more clamorous, and for the present saved—our friends.

CHAPTER XI.

The clock in the steeple of the market-house, which towered almost over his head, struck eleven upon the glad ears of the man of the book, proclaiming the hour at which he was free to shut his registry, and decline to enter the names of any more candidates for the day's sport. Accordingly, he closed the ponderous volume, with a clap that startled his admiring spectators, and in a loud voice commanded some of the servants of the ring to lead the bull from his adjacent stall, and bind him to his stake, the battered and humiliated market-cross.

These proceedings, of themselves, diverted the wrath of the people from their imperturbable tormenters, and even produced some slight decorum in the critical young lady and her party: but it is to what followed we would invite passing attention.

A struggle took place at that point of the barrier over which the proprietors of the assembled dogs had jumped to approach the secretary. It was evident that the two stout officials there posted endeavoured to prevent some late aspirants from passing into the ring: voices rose high in altercation, and the guardians of good-order flourished their staves, and used their hands to push back the pertinacious claimant. But, after much wrangling, at a favourable opportunity, he cleared the nearly breast-high inclosure at a bound, and stood within the prohibited arena.

"The most Chistian and properest-looking man I have seen, as yet," said the watchful young lady to her companions speaking French.

"Ay?" whispered her male friend, half turning round to confront this praised person; but checking himself, "You know, my dear, I must still hide my face from them all, as long and as well as I can; but describe your knight, madcap."

"Tall, and about twenty-five; well-contrived in the limbs; well enough in feature for a man; a smart, though somewhat rustic cap, set loosely on his head, a green riding-coat to his back, buttoned tight, as who should say he had not a figure to show, a sword at his side, spurs at his heel, a whip in his hand, ruffles at his wrist, and the sauciness of Lucifer in swaddling-

bands on his face, now that he has made that wonderous jump and cleared those plebeian grooms."

"Good, for a sketch;—now tell me what else *he* is good for, or may be?"

"Hark, and know!—*There* was a fairy blast wound on the silver whistle slung round his neck!"

"To what purpose?"

"Oh, that you could see!—it has summoned, and brought to his knee, over the shoulders and heads of all opposers, a monster, of I know not what race, but I suppose we must call it dog, upon this dog-day, as big as a Kerry cow, and, heaven save us! looking as fierce as a royal tiger."

"And how many have both eaten up, as yet?"

"You must wait a while to learn, if I am to be your instructress—the scene grows too good to look at and tell of in a breath; only have patience, however, and I shall faithfully copy it for your idleness."

While the lively lady takes her own time to represent things as she pleases, other spectators shall not be kept waiting.—Patrick O'Burke stood patting Brann's head, and scowling defiance at her and his temporary enemies. The guardians of the barrier advance hostilely to him, and commanded him to repass the bounds he had broken with his dog.

"That I will never do, masters," replied Patrick, now smiling contemptuously, and speaking with assumed carelessness—"I am here to have my name, or rather my little dog's name, entered in your book for a tilt at the bull, and my business must be done—where is the man to speed it?"

The sturdy officials pointed to the secretary, enclosed within his proper palings; but added that the hour was past, and that it would be useless to apply to him.

"We shall see," said Patrick, and with only a slight exertion of strength and skill, he alighted close at the secretary's side, impetuously followed by Brann, who, in making her own bound, struck the solemn officer with one of her paws, and somewhat disturbed the dignity of his position on his three-legged stool.

"*Ma graw gal gorçoon* he war!" shouted the always agitated voice of the unseen Rory Laherty, from the outskirts of the crowd.

"Never a better!" echoed the rather more visible John Sharpe, whose cross-grained face just peered in a mixture of convulsions, (from great pressure, treading on his toes, wrath against all around him, and approbation of his newly-elected

protegé.) between the scraggy neck of a tall old woman and the shoulders of a gigantic man—"Never a better,—lad! til him, til him!—hu, ugh!"

But neither his own courage and address, nor the aid of these exhortations, enabled Patrick to gain his point with the precise secretary. The hour had struck, "and not even prince or king, ay, or the great Pope of Rome himself, with all his bulls,"—this he added sneeringly—"should enter a dog that day in the entering book."

"But you mean not to say, good fellow, that my dog shall not take her turn at your bull, if he and I fancy it?" questioned Patrick.

Yes; the obdurate secretary meant exactly that, and nothing else; nay, he meant more than that—he meant that Patrick should quit the ring forthwith, and take his stand among the good people outside its limits, as the bull would immediately be led to his stake, and the Mayor immediately follow, and time could not be spared for idle altercation.

"No, no, friend," said Patrick, "I do not think it is in my mind to undergo, anew, a squeezing such as I have just escaped from; but since you will not oblige me in the slight matter I have demanded of you, you cannot surely make objection that I stand here at your side, to witness the coming sport?"

Strong and loud objections, however, the officer did make; and when Patrick repeatedly declared that he would not move from his present comfortable place, he angrily commanded the two keepers of the barrier, who all this time stood near, and as many more hands as were willing, to force "the spawn of the old Papist" out of the ring.

"Hear you that?" whispered the observant young lady so often spoken of to her male companion: it will be remembered, that the remarkable strangers sat in the front and in the lowest row of the tiers of the planks, and were divided from the secretary's enclosure only by stakes and boards.

"If I am removed, good fellow," remonstrated Patrick, drawing his light sword, "it must only be after this bright steel passes through the churl bodies of more than one who shall dare to lay hands upon me:—and look you," pointing to Brann, who began to growl and pace round her master, "This Papish hound is to be removed too."

The voice of the secretary rose higher; he appealed to the assembly against these blood-thirsty threats of one who drew upon peaceable and loyal people a sword which he was not entitled to wear at his hip, and many of the lower orders, particu-

larly those who, like Patrick, had come too late to be "entered," but who, like him, durst not venture to insist on opposing the laws of the Bull-ring, answered the appeal by hissing, hooting, and crying out to have the "saucy Papish cur" flung headlong to them, that they might award him his merits. At the same time, three or four of the most violent of the mob prepared to clear the barrier and reinforce the installed guardians of good order, and it seemed, indeed, that matters were to proceed to extremity.

"Can we do nothing to assist the Papist lad?" again demanded the young lady of the gentleman at her side; and hereupon they began to whisper earnestly together.

"Hold, fellows," cried Patrick, seizing Brann's bristling neck ere the foremost of his foes closed upon him: I wish to avoid all real violence if possible, and therefore let us strike a parley: provide me a seat here, at my back, and I will quietly leave your ring."

But when inquiring glances were directed to the seats he spoke of, no place appeared vacant, all having been occupied within the last half-hour.

"By well-managed packing and contriving, it may be done however," resumed the young lady, still speaking to her protector; and while she spoke, she and both her friends moved close together.

"Quit, quit!" roared Patrick's opponents, "there is no room for you among the gentlefolks; quit!—and take your stand with your betters outside the ring."

"Turn," said a low sweet voice, almost at Patrick's ear; and when he obeyed the command, his eyes encountered those of his new friend, as she pointed to a scanty seat by her own side. Surprise, and, indeed, admiration, kept him silent for a moment, —and motionless too, except that with much respect and ceremony he raised his hand to his cap, and stood uncovered and bowing before her.

"Haste, if indeed you are in earnest disposed to save us a broil," she resumed, speakingng briskly, while she turned her eyes and head away—"haste, and treasure up your politeness for another time, and for some other person; doubtless 'tis not too much to carry about with you?"

"Madam—" Patrick began to mumble.

"Jump, Sir! we have seen that you can do that at the least —jump! and let us rest in peace and quietness."

And, thus exhorted, Patrick did jump, and so did Brann, uninvited, and in a few seconds was settled, to his great surprise

and delight, by the side of his despotic patroness, his huge hound trying to crush himself down at his feet.

The conduct, during this scene, of the tall and handsome countryman who had accused Patrick's protectress of being at present seated under the guardianship of the far-famed Rapparee Randall Oge O'Hagan is worthy of notice. He stood at that point of the barrier around which clustered the most zealous seconders of decorum, some of whom eventually entered the ring to support the men with the staves. In the beginning of the tumult, no voice arose louder than his in exhortations to punish the unbefriended Papist; and when those near him prepared to scramble over the enclosure, still he was earnest in encouraging them. And yet one or two shrewd and comparatively quiet spectators, who watched his manner and proceedings, felt half-disposed to believe that much of this show of energy was of a doubtful character. A smile seemed to lurk in the corners of his mouth at the moment that his words breathed the most uncomprising wrath in echo to the outcries around him; nay, the tones of his voice might be supposed to hide, in their very loudness, a mockery of the factious spirit which he caught up and repeated. It was suspected, too, although he readily volunteered to assist the reinforcement against Patrick in struggling through the dense crowd and passing the barrier, and although he even appeared to exert his great strength for the purpose, that he contrived to impede rather than accelerate their progress, in something of the way in which one, while playing with a child, will pretend to lend the urchin a hand to enable it to stand on its legs and run away, at the very time that one slily manages to keep it rolling about on the floor. But more interesting persons must be attended to.

"Now, at the least, Madam; resumed Patrick, after he occupied his rather scanty seat, "you will permit me to express my gratitude for your timely courtesy shown in my favour."

"No; and for a good reason, because there has been no courtesy shown in your favour," the lady answered him, while her eyes were fixed on the people straight before her at the other side of the ring.

"In my poor Brann's favour, then?" questioned Patrick, ironically and half-offended.

"No, again; for fear of the old saying, Favour me, favour my dog."

"In whose, then? for assuredly here are but Brann and myself to contest the honour, unless that, without our know-

ledge, we are two dogs and two men ;—in whose favour then, Madam ?"

"I have as much as answered your question beforehand :—in favour of my friends and myself, and of all peaceable people here, who have not come to see an Irish, or rather a mongrel Irish, bull-ring changed into a gladiator's circus."

"Well, Madam, I must be grateful to Heaven, then, if not to you, for any chance which has gained me the happi——, I mean the honour, I now enjoy."

Patrick withdrew the familiar word he was about to utter, because he saw a slight cloud begin to gather on the young lady's sunny brow.

"To Heaven, and to your guardian angel and patron saint, like a good Papist," she added.

"Good, or bad, or indifferent," he replied, again hurt, and allowing it to appear that he was, "I will not believe that I have been generously rescued from the common insult of the mob around us, to be ——"

"Twitted with Papistry here? Well; and you need not fully believe it, unless you are very much of a mind to do so, and furthermore determined to wage war, as best you can, against every creature you speak with."

"On the knees of my Papist heart, then, Madam, I crave pardon for my unworthy doubt; particularly as your last words embolden me to think, though upon indirect grounds, that I have a right to thank you for something, after all."

"For nothing under the blessed sun; and yet try your genius anew at the game of seeing things out of sight."

"Thus, then, under your permission. Since I have not obtained entrance to this honourable seat that I might hear my religion cast into my teeth as a disgrace and a by-word, surely it was at least pity for the unseconded Catholic that suggested the freeing him of the taunts, and perhaps worse, of the crowd without—and even for pity I *will* be grateful—I, who so seldom find it."

"Still, I would counsel you, sir, not to be at the trouble, though perhaps there was a little of what you speak about in the matter, and who could help it? A unit of an unfledged Papist flourishing his bauble sword against yonder host of bold and brave loyalists! We deemed you an escaped bedlamite, here; or supposing your wits about you, wondered that you did not go on your knees, and cry *miserecorde*, from sheer instinct."

"Again supposing the instinct."

"To be sure; and why should it not be supposed? They

know it is in you, and in all of your tribe; and ye are *what* ye are because of that knowledge,—second-hand men, and your wives and daughters helots of helots; things are ye, made only to be fined, imprisoned, disarmed,—(how come you by that plaything at your hip? think you to wear it long, after to-day?) —disarmed, disinherited, whipped to church by the beadle, or threatened with the loss of double your fortunes—twelvepence each,—and voted unworthy of loyal housewives, loyal mistresses, (you rode hither to-day, did you?)—sparrow-shooting, governorship of rabbit-warrens, and town bell-ringing."

"I did not indeed know—" Patrick began, but she interrupted him.

"Look again at the men in whose presence you have dared to think yourself a man, and thank God that you now breathe to feel a true repentance,—note the inborn superiority that sits upon their foreheads, and flashes from their noble eyes. See in particular the grand being just opposite to us, whose head, wedged in between two others, is gracefully covered with a red and blue night-cap,—and was it to his beard, and to the beards of such as he, you presumed to offer defiance? —beard, I may say, for owing, doubtless, to the lofty pursuits of the week (he will turn out to be the free, high-caste butcher of your city, I reckon) it has thriven on his chin since the last Saturday at night to this present Saturday morning:—before him, and such as him, you bared your little sword, did you? and deemed yourself worthy of slipping your Papish hound at an orthodox lord of the meadows? (Heaven keep you, pray I, from the thought of whispering your bristly monster over these palings and planks, by-and-by, in despite of them all!")

Patrick did not well know what to think of this rapidly-spoken tirade. The previous simplicity of his life left him almost ignorant of the worldly mode of hiding a meaning under a play of words; and whether the lady ridiculed him, or his late opponents, he could not exactly divine. He was, however, more disposed than otherwise to decide in his own favour, and at all events, he felt amused at her remarks, and once or twice had nearly laughed out.

After his timely escape from the secretary's box, those who had been pressing upon him, sulkily retired, at the prudent recommendation of the most important person yet arrived upon the scene, and left him to enjoy his seat in comparative peace. The ill-humour of the crowd still continued, however, against him, and when they had time to observe how he had disposed

of himself, it began to return in full force against his chance protectors also, and blending into one great current, this double flow of disapprobation soon became re-directed towards the place occupied by the strangers. During the lady's late discourse with Patrick, she resumed her good-humoured but mocking notice of the people, as may have been concluded from one of her illustrations, and the uproar against the unpopular visiters grew louder and more hostile than ever.

Perhaps because he observed this, "the great man from foreign parts," who, since Patrick's coming, had been turned almost with his back to him and his fair lecturer, his face completely hidden from the youth's notice, and seemingly absorbed in conversation with the dark-cheeked girl, moved himself slowly round, and made a sign for his second young charge to attend to something he had to say. She inclined her head accordingly. Patrick's eye involuntarily fixed on the reserved gentleman of the party which protected him, and who, to his great surprise previously felt, had not yet honoured him with a salute. The moment he looked, that person, evidently after glancing, for the first time, at him, was in the act of starting on his seat in a remarkable manner, but had withdrawn his features from possible observation; then there ensued between him and his more communicative companion whisperings more earnest than those with which their secret parlance had commenced, and Patrick declared the young lady looking askance at himself, seemingly in much interest. In a moment afterward her cloaked friend again turned away, and she sat upright in her place, with unusual gravity of deportment, but with a new and lively interest still playing through her speaking features.

She did not hasten, however, to resume any conversation with Patrick, and he was studying what question to ask her, when loud shouts outside the ring fixed the attention of all, and even those of the crowd who had been so angry against him and his satirical protectress. The people present caught up the shout, and the bull was ushered to his stake, gaining it by a passage, left open for him, to the base of the market-cross, from a neighbouring alley of the town. The animal was blindfolded when he entered the ring, a cloth being thrown over his head, as well, perhaps, to disguise its ornaments, until the fitting time, from public gaze, as to hinder him from being scared and rendered prematurely ill-tempered during his progress from his stall. But so soon as the cable, ingeniously and firmly affixed to his hind-legs, had been secured in the iron-ring of the market-cross, his conductors

whisked off with an air of triumph his envious veil, and at the sight of his garlanded front and gilt horns, if not at the grand glare of his courageous eyes, another great shout arose from the spectators.

"Noble creature!" said Patrick, willing to be heard by the lady at his side; "how astonished and how inquiringly he looks at the unexpected scene around him, as yet unsuspicious of the many foes he is led hither to encounter—though, there now! as the more currish dogs begin to bark and jump up to get a view of him outside the palings, he begins to have a misgiving, and to prepare for the fight."

No answer was returned to this speech; and Patrick continued,—"I do fear now and then that bull-baiting is but an inhuman and uncivilized sport."

"Especially for ladies," said his companion. Patrick endeavoured to explain himself out of the conclusion which he had certainly induced.

"Enough," she resumed; "the words have been spoken, and I agree with you and I do not. Use and the fashions of countries have much to do, if they have not all to do, with questions like this; and I have passed my childhood and girlhood in a country where ladies with blood-royal in their veins sit out exhibitions of the king of the pastures, which engage him in contests, not with dogs, at the risk of his being scratched, but with armed men, on horseback and a-foot, under the certainty of his being slain before the game is over."

If Patrick had a doubt of the seemliness of a lady being present at a bull-bait, these assertions removed it; but in fact it was nearly impossible that such a doubt, at least in any strong shape, could have possessed his mind; for from his childhood he too had seen the gentler sex of every rank attend such displays, nor had he been able to advance before his habits and his age, like Touchstone, so as to express his astonishment that "rib-breaking should be sport for ladies." But still fearful that he might be supposed to have ventured a reproof on the subject, he was about saying something very conciliating, when the approach of the Mayor of Bull-ring to open the amusements of the day, once more compelled him to be silent.

A squeaking trumpet and a dull-sounding drum, beaten with one stick, were heard behind the seats at his back, and then along the private passage which flanked them. Treble acclaims filled the air. The rude door of the passage leading

into the ring opened, and preceded by trumpeter and drummer, and by his bailiffs, and followed by his sheriffs, the Mayor approached his chair of authority.

His bailiffs, his sheriffs, and himself, were habited and appointed so as to give a grotesque, yet showy imitation of the real authorities of the city, whose names they usurped. He wore a red flowing gown trimmed with ermine, and much more embroidered than its prototype; his ample peruke descended over his shoulders; enormous muslin bands pended from beneath his chin, and his white wand was clasped with dignity in his right hand, while his left led on his beauty Maud. One of his bailiffs, both attired like him in extravagant emulation of their realities, carried his huge mock-sword of office; the right shoulder of the other groaned under a mace, of which the top was a heavy block of wood, uncouthly carved into the likeness of a bull's head, and covered with Dutch-foil: the smart cocked-hats, swords, and whole costume of his sheriffs were still copies of their proper originals (though in better taste, for the young batchelors who enacted these parts paid much attention to the gentility of their appearance); and even the masking trumpeter had on the uniform of him of the city corps, who always ran, swelling his cheeks and making a wretched noise, before the true Mayor of the loyal guild, and before each Judge of assize upon his arrival in the town: and the youth who smote the wet sheepskin of the drum with one stick, was a mumming caricature of the old man who always attended the chairing of a member of Parliament at elections.

And thus attended and caparisoned, the Mayor of Bull-ring stepped up to his high chair with gravity and dignity; his sheriffs occupied their stalls at his left-hand; his bailiffs stood with the sword and mace on the ground beneath, and the trumpeter forthwith issued proclamations to begin "the noble game of bull-baiting."

CHAPTER XII.

"Hear ye! hear ye! hear ye! all good men of Bull-ring!" cried the trumpeter: "by virtue of his high and excellent office, and in honour and perpetuation of ancient times and

customs, his Worship Mr. Mayor now wills and commands that the noble game of bull-bait be here and forthwith opened."

A good-humoured cheer, mingled with laughter, testified general consent and approbation of the Mayor's orders, and of the mock solemnity in which his crier made this proclamation. The trumpeter continued :—

"And first, it is his Worship's will and pleasure that the laws and regulations of Bull-ring be well understood by all his subjects, to the effect following :—

"The noble game to commence by slipping one dog at a time against Sir Bull, till all the dogs entered take their turn ; and first dog first, and last dog last, according to the order of the book of entry.

"Then such dogs as shall have legs to stand on, are to attack Sir Bull in a body, for the melée.

"Any two or more dogs that forget their proper enemy to fight among themselves, shall be withdrawn from the melée by their masters, and not suffered to take to the ring again.

"No dog that has not been duly and lawfully entered shall encounter Sir Bull during this day's bait ; and if a dog transgress this law, he shall be dealt with according to the judgment and sentence of Mr. Mayor, even to extremity.

"There is no appeal allowed from the decisions of Mr. Mayor, whether in the awarding of praise or blame to the dogs, or in punishing them, as has been last proclaimed.

"And now, valour and good fortune to all good dogs of Bull-ring, and may the best win the day—God save the King and Mr. Mayor!"

While the crier adorned the close of his proclamation by a new flourish on his trumpet, to which the vapid drum and the resumed shouts of the people made answer, Patrick's fair friend said, "A timely warning in the two last mandates to all such as dare dream of slipping an unprivileged dog."

"We shall see," answered Patrick. In fact, her first hint to him on this point had not been forgotten, and she now spoke with a smiling sarcasm which piqued him still more. He remembered, also, that he had come to the bull-bait, and brought Brann with him, chiefly because John Gernon had commanded both to stay away ; and the refusal of the man of the book to enter his name for "a turn at the bull," to say nothing of the insults he had afterward suffered, farther tempted Patrick to form a will of his own upon the subject.

A description of the day's amusement may now be expected ; but notwithstanding that such an exhibition was called

fashionable in England and in Ireland about one hundred and thirty year's ago, and that therefore even a lady's presence at it in those days must necessarily be excused by us, it is not intended to proceed with the sport under the eyes of more refined and enlightened spectators of either sex. The fortunes of many poor dogs, therefore, as one by one they rushed to encounter the now enraged object of their unprovoked hostility, must remain dead to fame or to commiseration. But events are connected with one or two dogs in particular, which may palliate some slight allusions to the proceedings of the ring.

It was the arrangement, that the masters of the combatants should lead them in pairs to the little enclosure sacred to the man of the book, in order that while one dog was engaged, another might be ready, bristling with excited fury, to take his place in case of overthrow, or when the time allotted for a single attack should have expired. About an hour after the baiting commenced, the handsome countryman before alluded to, was called into the ring by name, along with another privileged person—his name sounding loyal, as Patrick's companion observed,—to wit, John Johnson. With a loud and hearty "Here I am!" he vaulted over the barrier, showing an agility remarkable in a man of above forty, and then walked towards the secretary, his mastiff led by a chain, with a step and an air which would have been deemed courtly and gallant in a person of birth and station. Having entered the secretary's stall along with his comrade, he stood close under Patrick's seat, his head upon a level with the palings over which the latter leaned; but before turning round to face the bull, he offered to Patrick, and much surprised him by so doing, a secret, smiling, and shrewd glance, and then pulled off his hat and bowed graciously to the young lady at Patrick's side, who, notwithstanding her self-command, and what the crowd called her audacity, blushed to her eyes, and looked confounded at the compliment. His politeness, in both cases, did not seem to be noticed by the multitude, so intent were they in watching the fate of the dog then clinging to the bull.

That dog was disposed of; John Johnson's comrade hallooed his at the enraged and bleeding animal, and John himself was warned to stand prepared for seconding his immediate predecessor.

"She 's a stanch, true-blooded bitch now engaged," he remarked, turning to Patrick, "and I need to be in no hurry to loosen the chain from my own mastiff's collar."

Patrick made the man no answer. In fact, he had noticed his zeal against him during the contest with the secretary, and not suspecting its quality, as shrewder observers had done, wondered at John Johnson's insolence in daring to address him so familiarly.

"'Tis a great pity your own fine hound came too late for a tilt to-day, sir," continued Johnson, as innocently as if nothing had happened.

Still Patrick was silent, and now showed, by his brow, how offended he chose to be.

"He has the true ould drop in him, I warrant," pursued his new acquaintance, turning his back upon the ring, and confronting Patrick, with his legs widely extended, and his arms folded hard, while the mastiff's chain was held tight in one hand.

"And you—you, sir, have the boldness of the devil in you, I think," retorted Patrick.

"Oh, never mind me; there is little harm in me at any rate, whatever I may say or do, master; only, of a certainty, I never saw a finer ould Irish stag-hound than the one that jumped after you into the ring awhile ago; and I say again, 'tis a thousand pities he is not allowed to show what he can do against the bull."

"Mind your own dog and your own business, friend, or 'tis like that you also may have to complain of losing a chance this bait."

"How so, sir?" asked Johnson, smiling incredulously, and not changing his position.

"Were your eyes turned in the direction they ought to be, you need not ask, man; I tell you, that your comrade's dog is down, and that the Mayor, after looking to note how idly you engage yourself here,—and particularly with one whom he loves not,—has loosed his own bitch, and is now slipping her at Sir Bull."

"Ay, do you tell me so?" said Johnson, at last turning slowly round: "'Tis the truth, as I am a sinner.—Hollo, Mr. Mayor! what is your Worship pleased to be about? Sure, my turn is come now."

"It *was* your turn," answered the Mayor, from his place of high estate,—"it *was* your turn some minutes ago; but you have permitted the time to pass without loosening your dog, and that gives me *my* turn, to your discredit for the day."

"But is this good Bull-ring law, please your Worship?" re-

monstrated Johnson; "sure it was not in the proclamations, Mr. Mayor?"

"'Tis good Bull-ring law, notwithstanding, Sir Idler. So, halloo, Maud, dearee!" and at these words Mr. Mayor let go his bitch of the atrocious countenance, and with one bound she gained the ring, and with another the bull. Shouts of applause at their Mayor's decision, and at the gallant attack of his favourite, burst from the spectators; while John Johnson raised his hands and shrugged his shoulders, seemingly in patient resignation to a sentence, from which, according to the trumpeter, there was no appeal.

"You foretold my luck, of a certainty, sir," he resumed to Patrick.

"And after all your brass-faced hardihood towards me, since you came hither, and before you came hither, will you tamely bow to the hard judgment passed upon you?" demanded Patrick, now inclined, while he scolded him, to take the man's part: first, because his case of grievance resembled his own; second, because he suspected that the Mayor had thus punished him, chiefly in consequence of having observed Johnson in seemingly familiar intercourse with a detested person,—namely, Patrick's self.

"Why, you see, sir, this much was in the proclamation, of a certainty,—that if any dog runs at Sir Bull against rules, he is to be dealt with, even to extremity—to the death, mayhap," replied Johnson.

"Pshaw! they durst not harm a hair of your dog's tail," continued Patrick,—"nor of mine either, if I choose to slip him."

"But you would not slip him, of a certainty, on the risk, sir?"

"Would I not?" Patrick's eye kindled as he glanced towards the bull, and he stopped and engaged himself with Brann's collar. At Maud's first onset, she attempted, with consummate instinct, to seize the bull's lip; the only grip, could she have taken it, which, as is known, can quell the animal's spirit. By a sudden jerk of his head, he baffled her, and for her own safety she was then prompted to fasten on him as she could, and accordingly made sure of one of his ears. Thus tortured, the poor bull, unable to use his horns, strove to shake her off by tossing his head from side to side, or to cast her under his hoofs and trample on her; but he strove in vain. And this wretched struggle had been going on between them during Patrick's and Johnson's resumed discourse, until, just

as Patrick spoke the last words, Maud was flung off by her indignant foe,—not without carrying her own token of his ear with her, however,—and fell a heavy fall, nearly at the foot of the Mayor's throne, and for a moment lay motionless.

"Would I not?" vauntingly demanded Patrick.

"I do not advise you," said Johnson, gravely.

"Ay, by my namesake Saint and Ireland's patron, but I will, though, sir! And since you want the courage, see out this question of both our rights, my master."

"Do not," exhorted his new friend.

"Do not," whispered his fair protectress, gravely.

"Nay, but lady fair, *you* did not so admonish me a while ago; and now I say, with Mr. Mayor, 'tis too late to preach me up patience," replied Patrick, nothing but his hand now holding down the impatient Brann.

"She is not worsted, my beauty is not, and comes to herself within time!" cried the Mayor, who with his sheriffs had descended to comfort Maud; "and so, she is entitled to have her turn out. To him again, pet!" and he encouraged her with a preparatory and affectionate chuck under the chin.

"Not before her master!" exclaimed Patrick. "Up and off, Brann, you Irishman!"

"Still I say do not, Patrick O'Burke," again said the young lady, gently touching Patrick's shoulder; but this new warning, though it startled him, came indeed too late, for Brann had bounded into the ring.

"Holy Mother, Madam! you know me?" Patrick began to inquire, but what ensued left him no farther time for asking questions or receiving answers.

The Mayor had caught a glance of his proceedings just before he released his hound, and bellowing forth, "What 's to do now!—the rules broken through by an unentered dog? Punish him, Maud! pay him! give him his fairing!" he let loose his bitch at her well-known foe of the previous day. It was at the same instant that Patrick gave Brann his parting exhortation; the animals rushing in nearly opposite directions, encountered each other in a shock. Without a snap at either side, the mere weight and gravity of Brann sent Maud rolling on the stones, and instantly taking advantage of her exposed condition, he returned her the caress in the throat with which she had obliged him about the same hour the day before; and keeping her down with his paws, and by virtue of his tenfold strength, strove as hard for a *bonbouche* of her "sweet body" as ever she had striven for one of his. The Mayor of Bull-ring,

suspecting how the battle would go, hastened with his officers great and small to part the combatants, at the same time calling authoritatively upon Patrick to take away "his hound of hell!" Patrick, however, did not stir, and a few seconds more decided the contest. Ere he quite gained the dogs, the Mayor heard Maud utter for the first time in her life growling admissions of inconvenience, and saw Brann's long jaws making short gnawing snaps without parting his teeth; and at John Gernon's next step, Brann bounded away from his unhappy victim, flinging something out of his mouth, as if in detestation, although in rage and triumph. "My poor Maud, is that the way with you at last?" inquired John, standing over her. She answered him by one horribly-loving glare of her unlovely eyes, rolled from her back to her side, and was very dead.

This seemed enough, and more than enough, to arouse the utmost wrath of her disconsolate master against her destroyer and his owner. But turning to look for Brann, the Mayor saw him in the act of perpetrating if possible a more deadly offence —achieving the very feat which the late Maud had failed in accomplishing: in fact, Brann was fast in the bull's lip, and the lowered head, dropped tail, relaxed frame, closing eye, and even low cries of the fine animal, told the fact, and the strange and to us unaccountable fact, that under this seemingly slight injury, his wrath, his courage, his strength, his very nature had abandoned him.

The moment he beheld the sight, John Gernon snatched his ponderous and dangerous mace from the mock bailiff who bore it, and crying out, "Kill the curse-o-God hound! Upon him, all good men of Bull-ring! beat out his brains! crush every bone in his skin!" raised the almost unwieldable weapon over Brann's head, who noticed him not, so intent was he upon Sir Bull's lip.

"Never while I live, base churl, shall you harm a dog of mine!" was Patrick's mode of objection, in words, to this speech; his demur, in action, being a spring from where he sat to the side of the incensed Mayor of Bull-ring, with his small sword a second time naked in his hand. But he was spared the necessity of immediate exercise of his determined valour. John Johnson anticipated his descent upon John Gernon by one of his own—although even a stop-watch could scarce have measured his claim to precedency—and while he said, "Tut, tut, your Worship, do not slay one of the last brutes of his kind that we have in the country," seized the

formidable mace in its very downward progress upon Brann's unconscious head.

Gernon, after one unsuccessful though well-meant tug and struggle to free the mace, measured his new opponent with an enraged and courageous glance, and while both still had their straining hands on the—heavy mallet it must be called, croaked out, "Whoever you are, you are strong, ay, and tall too, and a strapping fellow, as it is called; but will you agree that we fling this mace to the ground, and, while it rests there, try a fall in wrestling with me, to see who shall pick it up—the two best falls out of three to decide the dispute?"

"With all my heart, Mr. Mayor," assented Johnson.

"I doubt you," resumed Gernon, still eyeing him: "Swear that you mean fair if I loose my hold of the handle of the mace."

"It needs not that I swear to make you loose your hold, Mr. Mayor, if occasion required, yet I will do as you ask. See here—" and he suddenly relinquished his grasp of the contested weapon, and rushing past the bull to the market-cross, took off his hat, bowed his head, bent his knee, laid his hand upon the long-neglected test of good faith, and added, "By this holy and blessed cross! I will do naught, and attempt naught, in the trial between us, but what your own terms prescribe; that is, wrestle with you for two falls out of three to decide our little dispute."

"I knew it! I knew it!" shouted Gernon; "another disguised Papist!" the people readily seconding him, indeed beforehand with him, while they witnessed Johnson's old-fashioned form of asserting his honourable intentions, caught up the cant word of the Mayor of Bull-ring, and assailed the self-betrayed Catholic with loud revilings. "And shall I strive with him as with a generous foe?" demanded Gernon, appealing to the populace; "shall I foolishly hazard life against the hidden skein of the rebel?" This was not faint-heartedness, but a sincere conviction that all Papists were unfair and treacherous adversaries. He was clamorously exhorted by the people not to engage with Johnson, but rather to have him seized and disarmed of his concealed weapons, as the man he abetted was doomed to be deprived of his more evident small-sword.

"Assist me, then, liege subjects!" exclaimed the Mayor of Bull-ring, making a spring upon the mace which yet lay on the ground. But Johnson again anticipated him, snatching it up before he could touch it, and whirling it, like an hazel-stick, in

one hand, round his head, while he stood alone at Patrick O'Burke's side.

"Rescue your Mayor, men of Bull-ring!" shouted Gernon; and his sheriffs, bailiffs, trumpeter, drummer, and secretary rallied around him, in the first instance. But one of the clauses of the proclamation of the legitimate town-crier, for the upholding of good order that morning, had been, that all visiters of the bull-ring should go thither unarmed; and consequently the odds which now faced Patrick and Johnson had but hands, or else unimportant missiles in them, to oppose to the naked small-sword of the one and the well-managed and ominous club of the other. They therefore stood still, even with Gernon at their head, after an ostentatious show of zeal; and the insulted and despised authority of the bull-ring had to extend his appeal to more of his admiring subjects outside the barrier.

"I'll tell you what we must do now," whispered Johnson to Patrick; "I, as well as his worship, have a friend or two (working men on my bit of ground) among the crowd; and for fear of an unkind reception here to-day, God knows but they may carry something or other about them: so I'll just whistle for them—the poor fellows know my note, it calls them home to their meals many a time—and when they clear the boards, along with Gernon's cronies, half of them will be at your service (supposing that I give them another hint) in the secretary's stall nigh-hand to you, and half of them at mine inside his Worship's snug inclosure; and then—but I can say no more, only this—" whistling—"if you have the wits I think you have, I have said enough—do what you can, at all events."

From the moment he began to speak Gernon's reinforcement tumbled, three and four at a time, over the main barrier, and Johnson was compelled to interrupt himself, as they mustered within the ring. He interrupted himself, however, to some purpose. His whistle, as he had modestly premised, was indeed heard and known by his humble friends; for about ten or twelve men pushed vehemently through the crowd, as it escaped him, gained the arena of battle almost as soon as the allies of the Mayor of Bull-ring, and at first unsuspected for enemies against the power that was, continued their violent scramble forward, till they surrounded John Johnson, even before Gernon had formed a junction with his own newcomers.

Simultaneously with their movements, two, nay, three, unexpected abettors took the field for Patrick. For many

minutes previously he had been almost sure that he heard the half-hoarse, half-screaming, and altogether unearthly voice of old Rory Laherty expending itself at the rear of the crowd in unintelligible, though extravagant outcries; and that of John Sharpe, issuing from his face, still punctually fixed in its last-described predicament, uttering a variety of authoritative threats, curses, and sarcasms, more audible than the accents of Rory, because he was much nearer to the ring; both now increased their vociferations to the uttermost, even for them; exerted all their decaying strength; and while John Sharpe won his way by pompous proclamation of who and what he was, in name, in station, in loyalty, and in service in the field; and Rory Laherty, by his strange and terrifying cries, clapping his hands, kicking, and even biting, both contrived to clear the barrier and gain Patrick's side, just at the moment, as had been said, that his colleague, Johnson, saw himself encircled by his faithful workmen. And scarcely had Sharpe slapped his new protegée on the shoulder, and Rory jumped up to kiss his cheek, than the provident pair of followers, doubtless having reckoned the chances of the day, produced each a pistol from his pocket.

It remains to introduce the third unhoped-for ally of Patrick. During all this bustle, the three strangers announced by Kit Holmes, of the King's Arms, had been standing up in their places, evidently interested to an extraordinary degree; and the gentleman and the more comely of the ladies conversed earnestly, and with much animation, together. A moment before the arrival of Johnson's and Patrick's friends, and the mustering of Gernon's near to the outward enclosure, their words were as follow:——

"He cannot be sufficiently protected, though—" the lady spoke—"his opponents double, nay, treble his supporters!"

"And now I see that they do," replied the gentleman; "and so an end to incognito, even though it cost me something—certain detection, belike, as an armed Papist, in this Northern town, with you to take care of, too, Dorcas, you wild-bird.—No matter; he has me at his elbow, in the name of old times and old blood!"—And with the encouragement of "That's like yourself, Philip!" from the spirited lady, the hitherto cautious gentleman let fall his cumbrous cloak, drew his sword,—a more effective one than Patrick's—and the next moment was as good as his word; that is, standing at Patrick's side; and more than that, shaking his hand, warmly and smilingly.

"Baron of Crana!" said Patrick, in a suppressed, though very much surprised tone of voice.

"Hush, man!" whispered in turn his old friend; "for the present, know me only as your seconder against this peevish rabble, and I will tell you why at our leisure."

CHAPTER XIII.

Indeed, farther conversation, distinct from the business to be attended to, was impracticable between Patrick and Philip of Crana; for, even while they spoke the few hasty words already noted, John Gernon was eagerly instructing his subjects in what manner to make a successful onset, and Johnson also interrupted the friends.

"Do not make any delay, Master," he said to Patrick, "in getting yourself, your servants, the new-comer, and half of my followers, who are already at your side, into the place I told you of. See! only wait another minute or so, and it will be out of your power to do it," pointing to Gernon's side of the ring.

"You speak to the purpose," answered Patrick; he whispered a word to the young Baron, to Rory, and Sharpe, and was immediately followed by them and the men, over whom the countryman had given him temporary command, to the enclosure alluded to. The rush forward seemed to be construed into an attack, in the first instance, by Gernon and his numerous abettors; for they checked their own motion towards the disturbers of the bull-ring, and steadily awaited the expected assault. But when Patrick only led his band into the well-secured stall of the secretary, and there packed them close, while they presented a semicircular front, defined by the planks and palings which enclosed them, vexation succeeded to menace upon Gernon's brow, at the gaining of this advantage in position over him.

"Neighbours, there is *your* stand now," whispered Johnson to the portion of his people, who remained at his side. He pointed to the second interior barrier round the seats of the Mayor and Sheriffs; he spoke almost before Patrick had secured his own stand; and ere Gernon could possibly have recovered his self-possession, after Patrick's manœuvre, he

saw these men racing across the ring, like dogs of chase, tumbling themselves into his sanctuary of power and office, and presenting a second cordon [illegible] while their aspects were dangerous, though not much agitated, and each held his right-hand in his bosom, or else under the folds of his heavy outside coat.

To the surprise of all, of friends and foes, Johnson himself did not, however, move from his place in the ring. He stood quite alone, within a few paces of the bull, and the still tenacious Brann, shouldering the Mayor's mace with his right hand, and letting his left-arm fall tranquilly at his side. His figure was upright; his whole air quiet; he even continued to smile; and yet, no one that looked upon him but felt a strange sense of his superiority.

"A word before a blow, now, Mayor of Bull-ring," he said, in an even voice, the instant the two interior barriers had been occupied;—"And, stop that man!" he continued, more commandingly, pointing to one whom Gernon was sending out of the ring, after some secret instructions. "Stop him! I advise you; send no message to bring down red-coats on us here, or you may rue it!" The emissary stood still of his own accord. —"Look! Master Patrick O'Burke, his servants, and the strange gentleman at his elbow, are well armed; so am I, and yourself will not deny as much, Mr. Mayor:" he smiled again, waving the mace round his head. "You don't know, of a certainty, and how can I tell, what my own poor fellows—being in fear of their Papist lives at this loyal bull-baiting—may be touching the present moment with the tips of their fingers; so, your Worship sees, that if you do send for the soldiers, there is like to be blood lost before they can arrive, and none of it at our side; nay, even suppose them on the ground, who can tell, I ask again, at which side the most may be let loose, after all?"

"Is this to be borne?" cried Gernon:—"Good lads of Bull-ring, shall we bear it? Braved and bearded on our ground, upon our own day, by a handful of scurvy rebels? The bachelor boys!—the bachelors! as I have bid you,"—turning to the hesitating courier,—"Ay, and before they come, mayhap it may be shown that we can do without them. Care not for a Papist sword or two, men, or for a Papist bullet."

"Papist bullet! ye speak a lie there, Johnny, dearee," interrupted John Sharpe.

"Tear up the street stones,—tear down the stake and boards,—any thing, I say—any thing!"

"Keep silence!" roared Johnson, as the excited mob shouted fiercely in reply.

"And upon that fellow first," resumed Gernon, pointing to him.

"Ay?" questioned Johnson, stepping quickly behind the bull, and drawing a large clasp-knife, "will ye, so? Look here! I do not stand alone in this open ring—I have a good seconder. Tear up one stone, or tear down one stave, and, by the blessed cross!—(I swear that oath again, to please ye) —I will cut the bull's rope, keeping safe behind him—and as he will run ahead of a certainty, straight upon his own Mayor and liege subjects, and as I can escape, meantime, to one or other party of my friends, then must ye all have something to do, without minding us, till ye have slit his throat or pulled out his horns!"

The courage of the assaulters was much affected by this threat. They stood still, looking at each other, or whispering, and there was comparative silence, which John Sharpe broke by one of his laughs, while he addressed Johnson in intended eulogy and approbation—"Ugh, hu!—jewel you are, mon; pet you are; and it's your notion, I like, lad; troth, jest."

"Shame on you, old John Sharpe, to stand there, armed against good and loyal people, by the side of Papists," said Gernon, now once more coolly, and as if loss of time had become an advantage to him rather than a grievance.

"You said that afore, or a thing like it, dearee," answered Sharpe; "and, upon the same, I gave a bit o' my mind til you; and now I say til you agin, there is na Papistry here to arm for, but crying wrong, the whilk must have justice; troth, ay."

"And do ye not yet know, Sharpe, although you had the time to learn since yesterday, that Papists, with arms in their hands, even if they commit no other crime, are traitors against the law?"

"No, hinny; not even since yasterday have I learnt as much; and I dinna think that your ain sel learnt it in your yesterday's lesson, dearee."

"Though *you* may learn it to-day, by heavens!" retorted Gernon, glancing over the heads of the crowd towards that quarter of the town which contained the barracks.

"Get awa' wi ye, ye deevil's darling!" exclaimed Sharpe, losing all temper, though such an accident was rare with him, at the same time that he hastily removed his pipe from be-

tween his teeth, for the first time in the memory of his friends—. "What bully's words are these?—Papists!—show me ae Papist fit to hauld a candle til ye, for deevilry, and all manner of raugues ways, or to any mon that taks your part, and I will shun him as I would an east wind.—Papists!—by the pipe, as good a race never cam o' your ain blood, Johnny, nathless that it is a new thaught that you put into my head—and you talk, do ye, and scare us wi' disarming, and fining, and banishing, and what not, do ye?—and my guid master's child—for a child he is til him—is to be treated in this fashion? He is, is he? Then hear what I tell you, Johnny Gernon—as sure as you, or any mon for ye, does this injustice, in the name o' Protestanteesm, so sure I, John Sharpe, will forswear ye a', root and branch, and go til the mass-house, itsel, with Master Patrick, the next sabbath at morn."

This self-important threat, from which may be deduced the essence of John Sharpe's religious rancour at all times, produced a laugh from the crowd, in which Gernon contemptuously joined, while he again glanced up the street of the town. Johnson, who had been attentively watching him, spoke.

"I know why you look over your shoulder, Mr. Mayor, and why you would now gain time, without trying your strength on us, or letting us go our ways in peace. But have a care of yourself, man: you are the peace-breaker here. Your bull-ring law is no law of the land, and the young gentleman who disregarded it by slipping his hound at the bull, never gave you warrant, thereby, to raise your mace over the poor brute's head. And if it is against the law for Papists to go armed, lawful authority alone, under the sign-manual of a magistrate, is sufficient to disarm them. Wherefore listen to plain and good advice—Ah, your humble servant, Mr. Miles Pendergast!" looking up and bowing to a window of the street in which that gentleman suddenly appeared, his face and manner showing much agitation—"You are a loyal Protestant gentleman, sir, and well known for a just man, ay, and a kind one, and you are come just in time to give judgment on what I say."

"You need not tell me a long story, friend," said Pendergast; "I have heard true account of that which has happened here, and I come to entreat or command all of my family, who hear me, to hasten to my peaceable home by my side, and to exhort any who would detain them, that by so doing the laws of the land must be outraged instead of being upheld; moreover, for the content of very loyal minds, I pledge my word,

that no Catholic over whom I possess influence or power shall from this day go armed."

"And I was only going to say, under correction of your opinion, words much like the words you have said, sir," resumed Johnson; "with this little addition only, that if John Gernon and his mob now refuse free departure to any man or woman who may choose to leave this ring, it will lie at his own peril.

"Doubtless," agreed Pendergast, contemplating the legal liability only, and not suspecting Johnson's hidden threat.

"Mr. Miles Pendergast," Gernon began, very unwilling to forego a public revenge on his own ground, for what he thought many and great provocations; but Pendergast stopped him.

"Silence, Gernon! and keep the King's peace here,—where, from your holiday popularity, you are heavily responsible.—And you, Patrick O'Burke, leave that place you stand in, and pass over the seats at your back, to meet me in the street.—As for you, Laherty, and you, Sharpe, make your own way as you can, and face me when you dare for this disobedience.—Gernon, your objections will be useless; I have been able, before I hastened hither, to stop your bachelors, sir; so, if you have any wrong to redress, seek it at the hands of the law;" and Mr. Pendergast left the window.

"And perhaps I may," muttered Gernon.

"Braun first!" cried Patrick, joining Johnson. Their united exertions soon disengaged him, though very unwillingly, from the bull. "Go back now, and meet Miles Pendergast," counselled Johnson; "I stay here to watch you free of the ring, and fear naught for me."

"But I will remember you," answered Patrick. He again joined the Baron of Crana. It has been forgotten to be mentioned, that the two ladies under the young nobleman's charge had stepped over the boards before which they sat at the beginning of the disturbance, assisted by him, and stood at the back of the phalanx wedged together in the Sheriff's stall.

"Do not return to your inn, at least to rest there," entreated Patrick; "Mr. Pendergast's roof will better protect you; and you know him, since our first meeting, and may remember that of him which will leave you no dislike of his company, or misgivings of his hospitality."

Philip of Crana at once adopted this counsel. Patrick led the fair-haired lady (whose scoffing smiles of almost all the passages of the adventure had not yet left her lips and eyes) over the planks behind them, much in the same direction by

which she had approached the ring. Her protector followed with the little "dark ladie." Rory Laherty, moaning at his master's ominous words, and John Sharpe, silent and grim, but chopfallen too, followed in their train, the spectators, through whom they bustled, standing up sullenly to let them pass; and all soon stood before Mr. Pendergast, who was ready mounted in the street, holding a second horse for Patrick.

Mr. Pendergast was prepared to meet even Patrick with a severe brow: when, perceiving him in the company of the Baron and his ladies, his looks changed into those of mixed surprise, curiosity, and interest, and he involuntarily held his hat in his hand, and bowed low in his saddle, changing his regards from one to another of the strangers.

"An old friend of ours, sir," said Patrick, observing that his patron's recollections had failed him—"The Baron of Crana," pointing to that individual, who trod close behind.

Pendergast's features brightened, and with much warmth and urbanity he held out his hand to the young nobleman, as he greeted him. Still his eyes wandered to Patrick's temporary charge, and Patrick made an effort to continue to deport himself as master of the ceremonies.

"You will excuse me, Madam, but, as I believe I am necessitated to announce you to my respected friend, and my best friend too, I pray you instruct me how it may well be done. Am I to say—" continued Patrick, his throat swelling against the probability, and his heart slightly failing him—"am I to say the Baron of Crana's lady?"

The lady, whose hand he still touched, after leading her down the planks, drew back a little way from him, fixed her eyes upon his in good-humoured surprise, and then bent her head towards her breast to laugh.

"My sister, Patrick," said Philip of Crana, who had overheard the roundabout question, and he now advanced with her to Pendergast. "My sister, Lady Dorcas Walshe," he continued, "of whom, if my memory does not fail me, you both have heard me speak, gentlemen, at a certain abstemious breakfast of ours in a wood southward; and her friend, much esteemed by her and me," he went on, turning to the second lady, "Mistress Louise Danville."

After gracious salutations, Pendergast, his eye straying beyond the group, said, "Your excuses, Lady Dorcas, while I speak one necessary word, here—So, Laherty,—so, Sharpe,—come forward, foolish men."

Rory advanced, beginning to clap his hands, and otherwise

evincing a deep, true, and yet ostentatious sorrow; John Sharpe, with a slightly bravading air, under which, for the sake of independence, he strove to hide some conscientious regrets, and not a little fear of his resolute master. John held his body and head as erect as if he were on parade, made his hands adhere to his thighs, stepped short and firm, and while his red-selvedged gray eyes sought the ground, sucked his pipe rapidly. "For Master O'Burke, on account of his youth, and because I but lightly warned him against this adventure at my leaving home this morning, there may be some excuse," continued Mr. Pendergast: "but for ye, men, both stricken in years, if not matured in prudence, and to whom I gave the strictest charge to guard your young master against all future rencounter with Gernon—for ye, what shall be said—or what have ye to say, or to attempt to say, for yourselves?"

"Just naething, so please your honour, have I to say for mysel'," answered Sharpe, only irked for the moment at the inconsiderable and extraneous chance of being thus arraigned by Rory Laherty's side, and, as it were, placed upon his level, as well in personal importance as in the commission of crime. "Just naething, only this—that I never gave the lad encouragement to betake him til the bull-ring, nor even knew of his so doing, till after he had left us; and then it seemed til me ae duty I owed you and him to trudge after him, and save him, as, under God, has been done, from the dangers he might encounter in an unprotected state; troth, jest, your honour."

"You, Rory?" questioned Pendergast, scarce able to suppress the smile which John's sturdy and yet crafty defence provoked on the features of all the other hearers, except Mistress Louise. But Rory would answer nothing, only hasten, by unaccented laments and strange gestures, to abandon himself to despair.

"I can say the same for that afflicted creature whilk I have said for my ain sel'," resumed Sharpe, his contempt of his humble brother becoming lost in his notions of patronizing him.

Patrick assured Mr. Pendergast that Sharpe had spoken truly; that he had communicated his intention of visiting the bull-ring neither to him nor to Rory Laherty; that no one could be more surprised than he himself was to discover them among the crowd; and he submitted that their devoted anxiety in following him, to guard him, as John Sharpe had said, against danger, merited the approbation rather than the anger

of their kind master. "My sins be upon my own head, sir, but forgive my excellent protectors," continued Patrick.

They accordingly obtained their pardon, though with a shake of Pendergast's head which hinted doubt of the past and the present, and a reservation for the future. A few words from Patrick then gave his patron to understand the claim on his hospitality preferred by Philip of Crana, at which Mr. Pendergast expressed the pleasure he really felt; agreeing with Patrick that, after what had occurred in the bull-ring, it would indeed be better for the strangers to accept the shelter of his roof in preference to that of the "King's Arms." And in order to save even all the moments possible, Sharpe and Rory were despatched at utmost speed to pay Mr. Kit Holmes for the entertainment he had already afforded to his "great man from foreign parts, with two ladies of his family," and to stand prepared at the inn door with their horses, in order that they might mount and make for Pendergast Hall immediately upon gaining the loyal caravansary, after slowly walking up a steep street which led to it.

Having alighted from his horse, Mr. Pendergast's offer of his arm to Lady Dorcas Walshe was accepted, while he slung his bridle over the other. Imitating him, Patrick proffered a similar politeness to Mistress Louise Danville. She stepped back, courtesied low, and seemed to decline the civility with an expression which was partly one of pride, partly that of embarrassed inexperience. When Philip Walshe addressed a few cheerful words to her, however, also tendering his arm, she no longer objected, but, supported by a gentleman at either side, followed Lady Dorcas and Mr. Pendergast up the street.

"And now, O'Burke," said the Baron, "our amiable friend between us will excuse us a question and answer or so, for the sake of old times.—Will you not, Louise?" he demanded of her in French. She bowed her head, and sighed, in a kind of constrained humility.

"To begin, then, Patrick, you and Brann have thriven apace, since last I met you, in this Protestant air, upon heretical drink, (something better, I hope, than we had at breakfast once on a time,) and heretical viands."

"Would you have us never be a man and a dog?" said Patrick, echoing the good humour in which he was accosted.

"No; provided that you had imbibed good rosy-faced Catholic bumpers, eaten prime Catholic venison and smaller

game; and that Brann had fared on the crumbs of your table, while both inhaled orthodox Catholic breezes, and ran free over Catholic meadows and hill sides."

"Then you pronounce us miracles of man and dog for our opportunities; but having such a disrelish for our climate, our earth's surface, and the dinner you get to-day, why are you found among us, Baron?"

"Ask the winds, or rather the whirlwinds, and the waves, or rather the mountains of salt water, which, without consulting us, sent Dorcas, her sweet friend, and myself into one of your iron-ribbed Northern ports, instead of suffering us to land upon the sandy carpet of a more Southern cove, Master O'Burke."

"Wrecked near at hand?" asked Patrick.

"Or almost; and sailing from Spain, whither I had lately gone to convey Dorcas home to her own country."

"Where Lady Dorcas had rested since our last meeting in my father's wood?"

"Yes; though I had not purposed that she should stay away so long. But, in little more than a year after I parted you in the South, certain knaves so much occupied my time, and so disagreeably too, that for her own sake I left her where she was, well protected in her convent; and afterward, until my troubles were over, I had interest to obtain for her as good protection out of it, in the family of a lady of the Spanish court."

"Your troubles?—I grieve to hear that."

"But need not wonder, if your retired life and loyal company-keeping have informed you of the spirit of the times. You heard me tell to Miles Pendergast, at that breakfast, (still I must undergo a qualm at the remembering it,) the nature of my title to my estate."

"And remember what I heard. During your father's life, your elder brother, Roger, was outlawed, at Meath. Had he lived after your father, and so stood in nominal possession, but for a day, of your father's estate, it would have become attainted in consequence, and so pass for ever from you and yours: I cannot readily forget facts so like those which make myself a beggar. But he was slain before your father's death at the battle of Hillsborough, here in the North; your father, though he fell at the Boyne, fell without having upon him the legal taint cast on Roger; and for that reason, died seized of an unconfiscated estate; and to you, who also escaped law and outlawry, and whose name, if I mistake not, is included in the

Limerick Treaty—to you the estate passed according to the established laws and usages of inheritance."

"Harangued like a prophet come to judgment," resumed Philip of Crana: "Now attend. What you have delivered was plain as the blessed light of day; and in the faces of foes and friends, I took possession, after a short visit to Dorcas in Spain, of the old castle, bowling-green, and acres. But, observe you, there soon started up men who averred the thing was not clear, but on the contrary obscure and doubtful. My brother Roger did not die at Hillsborough, they said, before my father; but rather escaped from that affair to France, a little wounded, and there expired—in truth, they hinted, was hanged for certain mal-practices, some months after the glorious decease of my brave father; and this, they said, they could prove; and after burrowing among the paper-lumber of I know not how many offices in Dublin and Paris, they cited your friend Philip to a high trial of the question, in the city first mentioned."

"Where you met them?" demanded Patrick.

"Whither I went to meet them, but did not so quickly as you would have it. By some score devices and knaveries, which I thank my God I know little of, they contrived to postpone the trial, from term to term, from year to year, on pretence of being disappointed of certain proof, deemed ready to their hand when they cited me. But at last the day of battle came; and although in the outset, they laid down such a story as startled even my own self, by the help of Heaven, good Catholic prayers and plain justice, my advocates talked and swore them down, and I was confirmed in possession of my plain right."

"Well, Baron, notwithstanding the trouble, this will permit you to sit in peace under a roof of your father's for the future, as your worst enemy cannot dream of shaking a judgment of so new a date," said Patrick.

"If one were found base enough to attempt the wrong, Baron of Crana," demanded Mistress Louise Danville, suddenly looking up into his face—"would he still be allowed to cite you to another trial, and put your title in fresh peril by a show of false evidence?" She spoke these words in English of good construction, a soft and thick pronunciation solely indicating her foreign tongue.

"By St. Patrick, and I fear so, Louise!" answered the Baron; and after his answer, she again bent her head to her breast, and relapsed into her usual silence.

"But pass we that, piously hoping no such chance is in store for us.—And now, Patrick, chiefly to apply my long story. You have heard the reasons which kept your sincere friend Philip of Crana from removing his only sister out of Spain till a few weeks ago; and you will also conceive them, in good faith and kind heart, to be the reasons which hindered him from taking a journey northward, to visit a young growing giant of his acquaintance. In truth, O'Burke, nothing but the fear of not being left a house to bid you welcome to, could have made the long break in our friendship—(is it not friendship, and shall it not be such?) which must have so much surprised you."

"Grieved me, only," said Patrick, "but your explanation sets all at rest."

"I will bribe you farther to forgive me, man: I ventured to the bull-bait to-day solely in the hope of chancing upon you there, after missing you at your good protector's house; for, although bent on hiding my face—and my sword too—while passing through your Papist-hating province, I could not be so near the last of the O'Burkes without hazarding somewhat to take him by the hand, and ask him to come and see me in the old castle we have won, a second time, from confiscation and what not."

"Came to the bull-bait to-day to meet me at it!" inquired Patrick, in good-humour, and yet recollecting something he had felt, "And why not know me there, when you met me there?"

"Very plainly, O'Burke, because I did not see you there during the lapse of time I am sure you now speak of;—you forget that, although I wished well to catch a sight of you, under direction, perhaps, of some town-gossip at my side, still it behoved me to avoid possible detection, as a Papist wearing a sword, by the acute people of your Northern country; and in consequence I glanced not towards you as the hero of a bull-ring brawl, until chance showed me your features, (little altered at about twenty, from what they were at fourteen, and I suppose an equality of fortune makes the standing likeness) upon the verge of the moment that was drawing you into your last difficulty with his worship, Mr. Mayor."

CHAPTER XIV.

At the last words of the Baron of Crana, Pendergast and Lady Dorcas gained the entrance door of the King's Arms, and their followers were compelled to end their present dialogue in consequence. John Sharpe and Rory Laherty appeared ostentatiously holding the horses of the young Baron and the ladies under his protection, although their proper servants stood near at hand, idle for something to do, because they had been deprived of their wonted office by the zeal of the emissaries specially despatched to fill it upon this occasion. Yet there was a manifest difference in the energy displayed by the two temporary grooms. Rory Laherty held and controlled the horse under his care with the self-abandoned devotion of one who might think himself immeasurably honoured, if not discharging an agreeable penance, in the performance of his imposed duty; John Sharpe chucked the bridle of his charge, and often spoke high and reprehensively to it, as if he went through a task beneath his rank in the world, and yet would faithfully speed it, for obedience sake, and love of his master; and farther, knew what he was about better than any living creature could tell him.

The Baron of Crana, his sister, her friend, Pendergast, and Patrick, all now gained their saddles, and moved for Pendergast-hall; Mr. Christopher Holmes, who had appeared so elated with his visiters, while making his speech at the bull-ring, scarcely coming to his door to bid them a farewell, so much had his altered view of their politics, or of the likelihood of their stopping under his hospitable roof, or perhaps both views together, modified his professional interest in their regard.

A short time after the arrival of the party at Pendergast's mansion, they sat down to an abundant, though, in consequence of the short notice received by the cook, not an epicurean dinner.

The table was covered with substantial dishes, and all had taken their places, when a rapid and uncertain foot challenged attention outside the door, and, unannounced, Father James started into the room. He appeared in his usual, indeed in-

variable, suit of thread-bare brown broad-cloth ; his pale and pursy visage much distorted since his recent rencounter with the Mayor of Bull-ring and his odious familiar ; his paunch hanging neglectedly under his wide waistcoat ; his whole person slovenly ; his whole air unsettled ; and his hands, earnestly rubbing each other, inside and outside, and back again. Stopping short at the door, he advanced with his habitual and unmeaning tender of homage to Mr. Pendergast ; but at a side-long glance of the strangers round the board, almost jumped, and showed symptoms of outcry, or of retreat, or of both.

Philip of Crana recognised him at a look, and strove to give him confidence by a greeting, half jocular, half respectful, and wholly warm. Pendergast and Patrick also addressed words of reassurance to the fitful priest; and after much more hesitation, he at last dropped into a seat, and composed himself, in a degree, to be helped to food and drink.

The conversation at dinner naturally turned upon the events of the day. Pendergast required and received a more circumstantial account of all that had happened at the bull-ring before his arrival than he had been able to obtain on his way thither in the streets of the town ; Philip of Crana, his sister, and Patrick, alternately giving him information in their different spirit and styles.

Contrary to his habits, Father James, at the first mention of Gernon and his bitch, lent a greedy ear to the discourse, and with a terrified, though now not vague face, glanced from one to another of the speakers, sighed or groaned deeply, turned on his chair, uttered ejaculations, and even proposed some questions.

The matter of the whole relation, which appeared peculiarly to interest Mr. Pendergast, was the conduct, seemingly so inconsistent in its beginning and ending, of John Johnson, the farmer. "I should have liked to have seen him," he said.

"But you did, sir," answered Philip of Crana ; and thereupon added, that the man in question was the same who had somewhat familiarly addressed Pendergast, when he appeared at the window.

"Indeed ! that is still stranger."

"But I am glad of the chance; for you can tell us who he is, and I cannot help feeling some admiration of the fellow."

Pendergast stated that, before the moment he had addressed him, he had never seen Johnson to his knowledge in his life ; "And that is what makes him a subject of curiosity to me,"

he continued: "I do not think so remarkable a man could be my neighbour, even for a short time, without falling under my notice, particularly as his actions at the bull-bait, and especially before the market-cross, proclaim a Catholic; and a Catholic farmer, in this Protestant county, would be a well-known man. Oh, he cannot belong to us: and then, how and where did he meet me, to know me so well, and give me such a good character?"

"I hope the poor Papist may get home safe," observed Lady Dorcas, "and that there is no corporation law of the city to punish him for the old-fashioned oath he swore."

"No, madam," replied Pendergast; "there, I am sure, he is free, though I am not so sure that other laws, of more importance than corporate ones, may not overtake him on his road homewards, if they do not prevent his leaving town."

"Heaven knows there are enough of them, newly made, to do either one thing or the other," said Lady Dorcas.

"New laws against poor Catholics, please your gracious ladyship?" demanded Father James.

"Against poor and rich, Father."

"Oh, the Lord keep us! the Lord pity us! the Lord have mercy on us!" he groaned, turned up his eyes, and smote his thighs.—"And all since the Treaty, did you say, madam?"

"All since the Treaty,—the broken Treaty, sir,—though I have not said so before."

"And against the poor priests, too?"

With a polite gesture of entreaty to Lady Dorcas, Mr. Pendergast answered this question, first entering upon a preamble, however.

"Good sir, do me the favour of attending seriously to me;" he addressed the priest.

"Doubtless, Mr. Pendergast,—doubtless, sir,"—and Father James bent forward with an interest, indeed gaping interest, joined to his usual show of extreme respect to his patron.

"You have heard recounted what happened to-day in the town, Mr. James——."

"I have, sir,—I have to my great sorrow."

"The which places many, if not all, of the persons present, in some danger."

"Not me—I have done nothing—I was not in the town to-day, of all blessed days in the year.—Let them prove it!—let them prove it!"—his old tremors began to return.

"Upon no such grounds, will *you* be exposed to inconve-

nience, sir; but, I pray you, still to give me a patient and serious hearing."

"I will, Mr. Pendergast—I do—God knows I do—He will judge for me—he knows my heart!"

"Then, sir, this is the point. To-morrow morning, if not to-night, I fear we may all expect a visit from some persons deputed by the legal authorities of the city—"

"Yes sir;—Oh, the Lord look down on us!"

"These persons may search the house, upon one pretext or another. In that case, they must encounter you, Mr. James—"

"Me, sir? why me, I ask again? my hands are clear of it—I know nought of it—I—"

"But I have only said that, in passing through the house, our expected visiters must certainly meet with you, good sir—"

"No, never: they shall not. I will leave the house ere they come!—Thanks, worthy patron, for many a year of protection, and for kindness, great kindness, since the hour I crossed your threshold—thanks, excellent sir." He held out his hand timidly, after standing up, and tears ran down his cheeks. Pendergast, with a pitying smile advanced to him, and accepted his greeting.—"But," continued Father James, "I shall never stay here long enough to bring down trouble on your head. The laws are made again—the dogs are out again—and I must have a start of them on the mountains—"

"Mr. James, Mr. James!" interrupted Pendergast, "moderate these unnecessary and indeed childish transports. Sit down and hear me, and what I have to say—pray sit, sir." He half-forced him into his chair, and continued, "There is no danger threatened to me through you; none; and give ear to the reason; because you are not known as a Catholic clergyman in my house—"

"Oh, am I not! am I not!" lamented the priest, his accusing thoughts vaguely reverting to Gernon and the scene in the grounds the day before. Pendergast grew alarmed at the manner in which he uttered these words, and resumed in a graver and more impressive tone:—

"Assuredly not, sir, as I know of. If, indeed, it were noised abroad that I sheltered a Catholic priest—"

"Oh! what would they do to you then, sir! what would they do to you then?"

"I should then certainly lie open to legal pains and penalties, Protestant though I be, Mr. James.—Nay, sir, I entreat

you to hear me speak. The trouble to me I think little of, compared with what you would be liable to in case of detection," Pendergast now continued, in the hope of making the priest's terrors work in favour of a course of conduct he wished him to adopt. "It is high time, Mr. James, that you learn your true situation. Hitherto, it has been hidden from you, out of care for your happiness, and in reliance upon your prudence; but you know, that ever since the year 1698—"

"Yes—ay—Oh, God look down upon us!—1698—yes—when was that, sir? what year of the Lord was that?"

"Ever since then a law of banishment against all men of your religion, in orders, has been passed, and rigorously executed. The said year had not elapsed without seeing four hundred and upwards of your brethren shipped for foreign lands."

"The poor priests! the poor hunted priests! Four hundred and upwards! The Lord guide them safe across the sea! God pity them, and us that stay behind them!"

"You that stay behind doubtless require the aid of Heaven to shield you from detection."

"Yes, sir, and pray for it every morning, noon, and night, upon our knees; and for our good protectors, and hiders, and benefactors, beseeching the Lord to grant them, in return, the grace to find out the true way, and the true church—"

"Mr. James, answer me: do you know what you stand exposed to if discovered to be a priest under my roof, after evading the law of banishment?"

Father James did not clearly know, but he conjectured some bodily constraint and punishment.

"Death, sir! And now, for the last time, pray compel yourself to understand the tendency of all this discourse. When the men I spoke of come hither, do your utmost Mr. James, to appear before them with a calm and confident bearing: speak not till you are spoken to; control your groans and mutterings, and other signs of great inward trouble. Above all things, in preparation for their call to-night, stir not from our table here to expose yourself to a rencounter with them in your solitary room; only, if you have left there any sure proof of your profession, hasten up-stairs this moment, return to us with the tokens, whatever they may be, and give them to Patrick O'Burke, that he may securely hide them."

"I will, sir, I will! may Heaven reward you! I will—there is, first, my precious papers—oh, Patrick, Patrick, take good care of them!—second, my brev—no! no! no! not my bre-

viary!—and where is that! oh, where is that!" He was running out of the room, searching his pockets.

"Stop, sir, if it please you," cried Pendergast. The priest became fixed to the doorjamb. "Have you lost the book you speak of?"

"Oh, I trust in the Lord, no, sir!"

"Nor, Mr. James, have you cause to fear any person suspects your hidden calling?"

"The Lord help me, I hope not, sir! Oh, how could it happen Mr. Pendergast? how, sir, how? Oh, where is my breviary?" and he left the room.

"You, Patrick, do you doubt your poor tutor may have discovered of himself?" resumed Pendergast.

Patrick could say nothing on the subject.

"And so, sir, you *do* expect a few visiters this evening?" asked the Baron of Crana. Pendergast answered, that from the last muttered threat of John Gernon, he made little question of the matter, to-morrow morning at the farthest.

"I wonder what they will do to us?" questioned Lady Dorcas, smiling. Her smile was returned in different expressions round the table, and silence ensued; which was broken by a single, firm, and loud knock of a bony knuckle at the parlour door. "Enter!" cried Mr. Pendergast; and accordingly John Sharpe stepped one foot inside the door, and then stood perpendicular in the growing twilight.

"Well, John!" questioned Mr. Pendergast, after he had remained an instant speechless.

"Your Honour," John began, sucking his "nose comforter"—"I can't exactly tell, sir, what it may turn out til be; but——" he interrupted himself to discharge some moisture which, smoke-impelled, was curving down the small channel in the middle of his nether lip, and he bent his head for the purpose, when, recollecting the presence he stood in, and the carpet beneath his feet, he became self-admonished and checked, by a short grunt which escaped him, and then took a quick run to the open parlour-window, and there held out his head. His pipe had been necessarily displaced for an instant during this process; when he again fronted his anxious hearers, it was in its old keeping, and, again sucking it with a solicitude and rapidity, resembling those of a life-preserving surgeon trying to resuscitate a seemingly drowned man, he continued—

"I cannot jest preceesely tell, as I said, what it is like to end in; natheless, I think it my duty til acquaint your Honour ——your Honour's pardon, a moment, but she's cross-grained

this turn—" still meaning his pipe, which he a second time paused to inspire with life, by tapping his fore-finger upon the ashes at its mouth—"but, as I was a-going to say til your Honour, I've been watching, for the last half-hour——awa' wi' ye!" breaking up his narrative for the third time, to twitch off a spark which alighted upon the bridge of his nose.

"Watching what, this half hour, John Sharpe?" patiently demanded his master, for he knew him, and his habits and practices.

"Naething mair nor less than a matter of five or sax strange bodies hiding about your Honour's grounds," at last answered Sharpe.

"Ay, what mean you by strange bodies?"

"People not of these parts, I'll tak' my davy, sir."

"Not belonging to us, or living on our farms?"

"Belike, your Honour."

"But resembling men from the city?"

"I will not jest eexactly be bound til say, sir."

"And they were hiding—that is, so demeaning themselves as to seem to shun being seen?"

"Even sae, Captain Pendergast."

"Some of the visiters I promised you, Baron," resumed Pendergast, addressing his guest, "sent on before more important persons to guard against escape from the house, perhaps."

"What are we to do, sir?—Fight?" asked the Baron.

"Fight, doubtless," answered Sharpe.

"By no means," answered Pendergast; "it will prove as much as we can do to come off well by our utmost civility; but being in my house an honoured guest, I am sure you will be said by me;—and first then, how shall we best dispose of the ladies?"

"By letting them stay where they are, to be sure, Mr. Pendergast," answered Lady Dorcas, while she still smiled.

"Yes," concurred her brother, "even Dorcas and her friend have no fears of a Mayor of Bull-ring changed into his master's—the true town Mayor's bailiff, I suppose.—But what do the fellows want? What will they ask, think you? our swords, and some shillings to drink our healths and damn the Pope in, I reckon?"

"Among other things, *your* sword, I think I may safely answer you."

"Here, then," he cast it on the ground near the door—"since I am not to use it, the scum shall never even demand it of me.—Louise, child, I have a thing to tell you," and lead-

ing the serious, but now highly-excited young lady to a remote seat, he began to address her in a light gay strain, which she listened to, and sometimes answered with remarkable energy and interest, often shaking her head, and once or twice suddenly flashing upon him an upward glance.

"Lady Dorcas, I grieve for the trouble you are about to be put to in this house, where I deemed you would meet shelter," said Patrick.

"I call it not trouble, sir; on the contrary, I like to study these pleasing little traits of Christian love towards us; and my chief interest still is to learn what under the sun they can purpose to do to us all? Your sword, along with Philip's, is gone of course, (I believe I foretold it;) but what after that? and, of all things, what to my friend Louise and myself?"

Pendergast had been whispering John Sharpe, who nodded approvingly and obediently, as his master pointed out at the window towards the wood, in the direction of Rory Laherty's hut. All in the parlour were startled by vehement cries in the hall.

"The demented creature his ain sel'," said John Sharpe.

"Having been surprised in his dwelling, doubtless," observed Pendergast, "and now escaped during the seizure of the very things we want to hide from notice."

"Nae, troth," resumed Sharpe, looking out into the hall; "he has them in a lump in his arms—Hauld your tongue, ye half-savage mon!" he called out to the gamekeeper, "and come in her til his Honour."

Rory accordingly ran into the room, carrying, wrapped up in the old vestment worn by Father James while saying mass in his hut, the utensils used at the altar during that ceremony.

When prevailed upon to hush his cries, and give a rational explanation of his conduct and terrors, it appeared that, although his dwelling had not yet been invaded, he apprehended it might be, in consequence of having observed suspicious persons lurking about it; and therefore, acting upon a foresight which astonished John Sharpe, he had escaped from it with the proofs of concealed Papistry it contained, the self-same articles that Mr. Pendergast had been advising with his steward to have removed to a place of safety, as the former has already hinted. But the most remarkable feature of Rory's story proved upon examination to be this; although he had caught glimpses of full as many strangers on the grounds as John Sharpe had done, they could not both have observed the same men, inasmuch as their discoveries took place at the same

moment, but at a considerable distance from each other. Mr. Pendergast pronounced it extraordinary that such a number of persons should assemble so near his house, for the purpose of making him a legal visit, and not remain together. Still he supposed they sauntered about, awaiting the arrival of their accredited leader.

He despatched Patrick to secrete the burden under which Rory had come laden; and his protegé had scarce left the room, when new matter to be wondered at occurred. A female servant, panting for breath, and pale as a ghost, tottered in with the strange intelligence, that, while discharging some of her duties above-stairs, she had seen a man's foot protruded from under her master's bed; and there was not time to question her closer upon the subject, when horrible outcries resounded through the house, from that quarter of it inhabited by Father James, at the same time that he was heard—all concluded it was he—tumbling and striding, alternately, down-stairs into the hall. The next moment he rushed in among the company, quiet wild with fright; and his anecdote was, that, in searching for his breviary, he had happened to fling aside the door of a closet, which he seldom opened, and there, with scarce room enough about him to contain a common-sized figure of flesh and blood, the Priest averred that he beheld either some one lying in wait to take his life, or else an incarnation of the enemy of man.

To complete the effect of vague terror beginning to be produced by all this, Patrick re-entered the apartment, also with a hurried step and an excited visage, fixing his eyes on Mr. Pendergast, who immediately demanded,—"You, too, have encountered your bugbear, O'Burke?"

"No bugbear to me, sir; but I assuredly have met a person concealed in the house."

"And not called him before us?"

"No, Mr. Pendergast; and for reasons which you may soon understand."

"Upon John Gernon's arrival, I suppose;—Well, then here he comes at last to relieve all the suspense and doubt he makes us suffer."

Pendergast advanced to the open window, as the noise of horses, galloping at a distance, reached all in the parlour; and the evening was not yet so dark but he could see a body of mounted men, in military attire, moving at a good rate down the rough hill-road which wound to his house.

"Now for our beads and paternosters," said Lady Dorcas to Patrick.

"It may be more serious play than your ladyship reckons on," he replied gravely. "Pray, permit me to lead you into this retired chamber."

"What, sir! to find there a second appearance of Father James's incarnate friend? No, no; my brother's arm for me, and I beseech you not to try to affright us with your looks."

"I cannot communicate what I do not feel, madam; but *you* do not know what I mean," said Patrick.

"*I* feel chilly from the open window," observed Philip Walshe, giving a slight yawn and shudder—"So, O'Burke, a cup of claret with you."

"John approaches us in force," resumed Pendergast, as the horsemen clattered into the outer yard of the mansion; "and still I wonder, and wonder more than ever, why he should think it necesary so to do, after having despatched before himself some score men, from all accounts, to surround us in our fortress, and even invest it, by stealth."

"These matters may still more surprise you, sir, when you see them out," said Patrick.

"Perhaps, O'Burke; but why do not our visiters come at once into the house? Oh! they make themselves at home, and lead their horses to the stables. Well, they are welcome; and let them have no difficulty in gaining our presence; let there be no brawling or battering at our gates and doors.—John Sharpe, go you and see that lock and bar offer them no opposition."

"I am spared a task sae much against my stomach, your Honour," answered John; "for, without encountering a gainsay, here they be, the deevil's pet-birds.—Ah, Johnny—ah, you dearee!" he continued, accosting Gernon, who entered the parlour while he spoke.

The Mayor of Bull-ring now exhibited in the trappings of a new character. He wore his full uniform as captain of the company of "Bachelor-boys," over whom, it has been said, he held honoured command; and well did he become his steel cap, buff jacket, and ponderous boots. And, notwithstanding the handsome sword at his hip, and his more official badges of superiority, a sash and gorget, John carried in his hand a carabine, with a bayonet, like the privates of his corps, three of whom followed him into the apartment,—evidently, by their looks and manner, three men picked from among their more handicraft

and even-tempered fellow-soldiers, to do their captain's present work well, and as he should like it.

"A good evening, Mr. Miles Pendergast," began Gernon, taking no notice of Sharpe's taunting salutation; and while speaking these words, he neither touched his cap nor bowed.

"Good evening, John," answered the master of the house.

"I know you are glad to see me, sir."

"I am not much disturbed, John."

"Why should you, Mr. Pendergast: all fair: and as we had a hard trot of it, though the distance is little, do you know, sir, I feel thirsty:" and he let his heavy body drop into a seat at the table, his sword and accoutrements ringing bravely, and seized the half-empty claret-bottle which the Baron of Crana had just laid down. With scarce a glance at him, and with a smile, rather than a frown, the young Catholic aristocrat said to Patrick, who sat at his side—"Then, as I was telling you, O'Burke—but let us seek a nook"—and quietly arose, upon this finesse, from the board shared by John Gernon, and offered his arm to his sister. The three friends than fell back from the visiters, followed by Mistress Louise; while Rory Laherty, edged round by the walls towards his foster-son, John Sharpe remained posted upright at the door, and Mr. Pendergast sought out Father James in the corner the most remote from the now palpable objects of his horror, and with a whisper and a touch of his hand, implored him to be prudent, and fear nothing. In this situation Pendergast faced the open window, Gernon having his back to it, as also had his followers, who stood behind his chair. The window was about a man's full height from a turfy lawn. The eye of the master of the house strayed to it, and he seemed to get a glimpse, for an instant, of a roughly featured face peeping over the lower part of its frame-work into the parlour. When Pendergast looked more attentively, however, the vision, or the reality, was gone; but now he could not be deceived in the fact, that the figures of five or six men hurried across the darkening lawn at some distance from the house.

Gernon noticed, and no doubt felt, the withdrawing of Philip Walshe from the table. He followed the motions of the haughty young nobleman with a staring eye and compressed lips. Then, however, he seemed disposed to pay him back, for the moment, some of his own cool indifference; for he also smiled before he raised a bumper of the claret to his lips, and when he had drank it off, he pronounced it good, with a smack, and filling his glass again, handed it backwards, not turning his

head, to one of his comrades, and said—"Try it, Tom, and if you speak well of it to your cronies there, who knows but they may live to taste it in their turn.—Where are you, our worthy host?" he continued, looking round the room for Mr. Pendergast—"Oh, yonder, keeping up your poor relation's spirits: well, and that's as it ought to be; blood is thicker than water. the gentleman is from far South, I reckon?"

"Certainly from the South, John."

"I thought as much; and related to you by your own blood, or through your excellent lady deceased, which, sir? the report of the country says by your own blood, and yet I don't half believe it."

"Then you are sagacious, John, as I always deemed you to be; not by my own blood, assuredly."

"See what a guess I had, Mr. Pendergast, as you say. And you call him one Mr. James, I am told?"

Scarce able to restrain some vague fancy of the priest from breaking out into words if not actions, Pendergast answered, "James is his name."

"I wonder have he and I ever met before to-night.—What ails the gentleman? is he ill, sir?" as a boding groan escaped the trembling ecclesiastic; "But it grows so dark I cannot discern his features.—Lights, old John Sharpe," he continued, swinging himself round to that person.

"Lights, dearce?" questioned John, "lights for ye, and at your bidding? Yes, ay, to be sure, and why not? But do ye ken the kind, and the only kind, ye'll ever get a hand frae me to help ye to? If not, I'se tell ye; I'd venture and step, Johnny, inside the gate out of whilk 'tis said there's nae return, and ane short run across the het floor o' the same place, just to carry in a fresh-kindled fagot for your comfortable bed, hinny, troth would I; but till the time comes that I can so far help ye, ye'se have nae chamber-lights at your pleasure frae John Sharpe, pet."

"Good, John," said Gernon, laughing; "good, and like yourself, old crab-apple.—But, Mr. Pendergast, *you* will order us what we ask for, I am assured."

"Begone this moment, John Sharpe, and fetch in the things demanded, and with your own hands; I wish not that another servant enters here, perhaps to create confusion," said Pendergast, in a voice not to be disregarded; and with many mutterings, wrathful and bitter, and with another laugh from Gernon, in which his trusty men joined, the mortified steward was compelled to withdraw.

A silence took place in the parlour until his return, only broken by a shuffling of Father James's feet in his corner, and by Gernon's audible guzzling of one or two more draughts of the wine which he had praised; and it was now so dark that the faces of the company became indistinct to one another.

CHAPTER XV.

John Sharpe stayed away longer than he needed to have done, supposing the articles he went to fetch arranged to his hand, and his mind and heart willing to hasten back with them, or supposing no unexpected circumstances to have otherwise engaged him. At last his step was heard, however, in the hall; light began to stream in through the half-open parlour-door, and he re-appeared, a candle in each hand, but with an expression of countenance very different from that expected of it, considering the humour in which he had gone to obey his master's commands. In fact, John's eyes danced gayly, and there was a sneering yet rejoicing smile on his lips, as, laying the candles on the table, he said to Gernon, "There, then, mother's jewel! there they be for you; and now see what good they 'll do ye: ugh, hu!" Pendergast was astonished.

But, still paying no attention to his irony, Gernon held up one of the lights in his right-hand, shaded his eyes with his left, and glanced, half-closing his eyes, to Father James's corner. The priest appeared turned faceward to the wall, his arms extended over his head, and his legs moving up and down, as if he deemed it possible to escape, by clambering upward, from the dreaded scrutiny of the man of power. It was to assume this position that he had been heard shuffling in the dark.

"What! at your prayers, good sir?" asked Gernon, smiling; "repeating them out of book, eh?" Father James could not restrain his groans; "And you won't let me be sure, by a sight of your face, whether we are old friends or no? Well, no matter: I think I remember your back; stay as you are, if you like it, for the present.—Now, to enter on business in a regular method," continued Gernon; and thereupon he slapped the candlestick heavily on the table, pushed away with both

hands the glasses and bottles near him, composed his face, hemmed, and slowly and gravely drew more than one piece of folded parchment from his pocket.

"Here they come, the terrible scraps of sheepskin," observed John Sharpe, chuckling; "and sure it's our ain poor sels that shake in our ain skins at the bare sight of 'em."

"Keep silence, sir, unless you have grown stark mad upon the instant," cried Pendergast.

"Well, and maybe I have; who knows? More unlikely things come to pass, your honour, so I will hold my peace; and why not, to be sure? Let nae one give interruption to Captain Gernon; not on ae earthly account; troth, jest."

"I find here," said Gernon, in a sonorous, even voice, "warrant from my brother the Guild-mayor of our city, to seize upon the well-limbed and sleek-coated hunting-horse of Master Patrick O'Burke, the same being interdicted to a Papist by Act of Parliament of the present reign of our pious deliverers King William and Queen Mary, and becoming my property by payment of five pounds to the nominal owner."

"Five pounds!" screamed Rory Laherty; "The O'Burke's own hunter! he worth five times more as much any fair-day!"

"Yes, I think he will fetch money," observed Gernon; "I liked his points passing well as your young master rode down the street this morning to our bull-baiting."

"Wirra-sthrew! wirra-sthrew!" lamented Rory.

"Keep your wild noises within your ain teeth, ye uncivilized creature," said John Sharpe, "and let him tell us a' about it;" and he laughed again, still confidently.

"In this warrant," resumed Gernon, "is a clause, empowering me to demand and obtain the sword which the said Patrick O'Burke wore into town the morning; as also the sporting-piece which he was seen carrying about Mr. Pendergast's grounds yesterday."

"You shall have them," said Patrick; "there is the first-mentioned;" he flung down his sword. "The second stands in a corner of the hall without."

"Thanks, master, I have seen it;" John Sharpe again laughed, but said nothing.

"I told you, I believe," whispered Lady Dorcas to her disarmed knight. Patrick smiled, and glanced towards a second door almost opposite to that by which Gernon had entered, ere he answered, "He gets it quietly, indeed;" and he and the lady continued to converse in a low tone together.

"I find here a farther clause to secure and carry away the

piece which Rory Laherty, called gamekeeper to Miles Pendergast, Esq., also appeared abroad with, yesterday," continued Gernon.

"You shall have that too for the seeking," replied Patrick, raising his hands to still Rory's cries; "'tis in his hut in the wood."

"Yes; let him send for it," sneered John Sharpe.

"Go, Tom, and order one of the men from the hall-door to secure it," commanded Gernon; and Tom withdrew accordingly.

"To be sure; go, Tom; and why not?" continued Sharpe.

Pendergast could not at all surmise the nature of the seemingly affected levity of his steward: Patrick, however, whispered to Lady Dorcas—"The old man's embassy for the lights has, I believe, initiated him."

"Rory Laherty showed a pistol in bull-ring to-day, I will farther thank him for that;" Gernon went on.

"Lay it on the table, Rory; I know it is about you," said Patrick; and with continued laments, Rory obeyed.

"Yes—there—lay it on the table, Rory," echoed Sharpe.

"And, to have done with Rory Laherty—" Gernon now referred to a sealed letter, which he handed to Pendergast—"by reading this, written to your honour by my brother the Civil Mayor of our good town, you can aid me in my duties of the night."

"You are no longer my gamekeeper, Rory," said Pendergast, after perusing the official note; "for here his Worship assuredly reminds me, that by an early statute of the present reign, your religion incapacitates you from holding the situation, either in my service or in that of any other person."

"The twa-horned deevil!" ejaculated John Sharpe, in generous surprise and wrath at the manifestation of this new legal point, of which he had been ignorant—"The twa-horned deevil and his mither!—does your honour speak the real law in that matter?" cries of downright anguish meantime escaped Rory.

Mr. Pendergast assured his steward that there was no doubt of the law of the case, and John's visage now assumed a grim disapprobation, and a thoughtfulness, as if he seriously debated within himself the question of religious apostacy which he had mooted, in a fit of passion, at the bull-ring.

Gernon, unmoved in the orderly discharge of his business by any thing done or said around him, proceeded to examine a second piece of parchment, and called out, not raising his

head—"Answer to your name, if so you hear me call upon you—Philip Walshe, Baron of Crana!"

"Here, man!" and the young Baron turned spiritedly towards his challenger, in surprise, although he had expected some inconvenience from Gernon's visit long before the bully appeared.

"*Your* sword, please your Baron's Worship."

"I wear none, fellow: that near your feet *was* mine, however."

"Pick it up, Willy; 'tis worth the trouble, if I may judge from the glittering of the handle—does your nobleness carry any concealed weapons?"

"By mine honour, no sir," answered Philip Walshe.

"And your honour is to be our certainty? um!—well, let it pass current this turn. Your honour's servants—who will answer for them?"

"I will, as well as for myself: no servant of mine has carried arms, openly or concealed, since the Limerick Treaty, which denied to them—and ratified to me, and such as me—the use of sword, gun, or pistol, to guard against the outrage of common ruffians."

"Well; I credit you in this point too, Baron of Crana; and the more especially as the men are in the house, and can be requested to answer for themselves.—Another question, I pray you. There is a lady travelling with you, called Mistress Louise Danville?"

The young foreigner started into much energy at these words, and emphatically answering "Yes!" she advanced a step to the table.

"A very small and curious poniard, or dagger, was observed to fall from your bosom at the door of the King's Arms, as you dismounted from your jennet this morning, Mistress," pursued Gernon.

"Well? well?" she demanded in almost breathless haste, while her hand was plunged into the upper folds of her dress.

"You will not surely deprive the young gentlewoman of that bauble?" remonstrated Philip of Crana;—"It was her father's—her dead father's—the last relic of him she has been able to obtain, and she but carries it on her person to keep it safe during our rapid journey."

Her eyes thanked her advocate most eloquently; and then fixing a look on Gernon, she said, in a low, deep, firm voice—"With life, I will never part with the little weapon!"

"I pray you, good fellow, let us ransom that, at the least,"

resumed Philip Walshe, advancing and laying money on the table.

"Yes; there!" added Louise, while she flung a purse after her protector's offering.

"Well: I am never averse to be civil," growled Gernon, retrieving the gold; "and so the poor little French gentlewoman may keep her father's plaything."

Mistress Louise retired close to her friends, smiling proudly, but her eyes were moist.

"To continue our weary task, Baron—(I pray Heaven it may ever end!)—there are the handsome horses belonging to you and the two ladies—your followers may keep their roadhacks for me; they are worth little more than the unmeaning five pounds a-head decreed by the law to be paid for all horses taken from Papists, if, indeed, they are worth so much; and I see little loyalty in losing money by any matter of business—but, as I observed, the three pretty jennets?"

"Oh, they too may be ransomed, Mr. Mayor," pleaded the Baron, now half-laughingly.

"No, no, they must needs pass before other eyes than mine—eyes which have taken a fancy to them perhaps; so your Honourable Baronship may as much as count them gone from you, henceforth to be engaged in ambling under more loyal loins than we can reckon your's, or even those of the gracious gentlewoman at your side.—And now, let us see: when you and Master Patrick O'Burke are after settling with their pious Majesties, King William and Queen Mary, for the amount of Sundays upon which you have not repaired to some church of the religion by law established, to join in public worship, since the passing of the Act obliging all good subjects to do the same—why, when both are after making some such settlement, I deem I shall be empowered to declare myself disengaged from you and him."

Philip Walshe laughed aloud at this new and by him quite unexpected demand on the part of the illustrious sovereigns whose subject he was. He knew, however, of the law under authority of which it was made, and therefore only demanded of Gernon, half-ironically, half-jestingly, how he proposed to assess the amount of the fine; adding "I think, honest John, we must needs lump it, directed by two virtuous umpires, one of your choosing, one of mine."

"By no means, Baron of Crana," replied Gernon, "as you shall see. Answer me, first, how often in your life have you

been at public worship in a church of the established form ?"

"Never, credit me, good fellow."

"I do; and I warrant your two ladies will make a like answer."

"Be assured they will, Mr. Bull-necked—Bull-ring Major, I mean."

"Oh, never heed the slip of the tongue, your Noble Worship, it harms not John Gernon." He smiled in a way that imported it might harm some one else.—"As to Master O'Burke and his old follower, Laherty, I think I may answer for them myself, from my own knowledge and observation."

"You may indeed, John Gernon," said Patrick.

"Doubtless. Thus, then, stands our account so far. The law obliging all good men and women to repair to church every sabbath-day has been enacted nearly seven years; call it six years, for indulgence sake. Since neither you, Baron, nor your ladies, nor your worthy young crony, and the man that was Mr. Pendergast's gamekeeper, have *ever* been at church in your lives, you cannot well have been there during the lapse of these six years. The fine for each weekly omission, for each defaulter, is twelve-pence. We count fifty-two weeks in each year, which makes fifty-two shillings, one year's neglect of the statute, incurred by said defaulter. Six years' neglect is six times that sum—to wit, three hundred and twelve shillings, or fifteen pounds twelve shillings"—John recurred to a slip of paper on which his calculations had been ready made—"now due to their gracious and pious Majesties at the hands of each law-breaker who at present hears me; and I am heard and understood by five such, and so five times the fifteen pounds twelve are, in even numbers, seventy-eight pounds; which seventy-eight pounds I claim to have paid unto me forthwith, or by virtue of this warrant," producing yet another piece of parchment, "it will become my duty to arrest said five defaulters in the King's name, and convey them to his Majesty's prison in our good town, there to abide till it is paid, and all legal expenses, such as costs of warrant, gaol fees, bailiff's fees, and so forth, discharged at same time.—And now, Miles Pendergast," continued Gernon, throwing aside the mask of assumed moderation, and thumping the table as he started up "you wished me, in bull-ring to-day, to proceed with your friends according to proper authority and warrant—will these do, sir?—will these do?" huddling his legal instruments together. "Look at them, sir—look at them, and tell me!"

"I do not dispute their efficacy, John," answered Pendergast, glancing over them; "but, good John—"

"Good John!—Good hocus-pocus-and-my-nose-in-a-fiddle-case, and the-wind-blew-off-my-hat!" scoffed Gernon, snapping his fingers, as he used one of the select pieces of slang then in vogue among his "bachelor boys."—"Seventy-eight pounds good and current coin of their blessed Majesties' realm—that 's the talk! No flour-de-louce, nor no base doubloons among it! Set the money on the table before my eyes in less than ten minutes, or to our good stone gaol your Papist cronies go, Master Miles! Ten minutes, I say, for I am tired of their evil company, and sick of the rincings of your bad claret! Meantime, let us be assured that our business is quite sped in your house.—Where is that poor relation of your's, Mr. James, sir? Oh, yonder, still at his devotions. Will he not turn to us a moment, even yet?"

Pendergast abandoned all other considerations rapidly to rejoin the bewildered clergyman, and once more put him on his guard, and urge him to rally his utmost prudence and self-command to meet the coming test.—"Turn, Mr. James, turn, good sir," he began aloud; then added in a whisper, "Turn, and be a man, or you are lost!" But his words only produced the effect of making the now nearly maniac Father James redouble his groans, and the up-and-down motion of his legs."

"I see the gentleman will not heed you, even for your whispering, Mr. Pendergast," observed Gernon; "so stand back, sir, and let me try my hand.—Good Mr. James, worthy Mr. James," he continued, now close to his abhorring victim, "what troubles you, sir? Here is nothing and nobody you should fear, for you are no concealed Papist, surely; you are no neglecter of lawful Sabbath worship. I pray you, show us your features, excellent Mr. James, if only to look approvingly on our evening's work. Do, sir, we pray you do." Gernon laid his hand gently on his shoulder once or twice. Father James at first cringed and shrunk under the touch, then suddenly dropped on his knees, with a sore, sore moan, and put his hands together in prayer, his face still turned close to the wall.—"What, sir! you force us to be downright with you, do you?—Here then, Maud! halloo, Maud!" and he bellowed horridly at Father James's ear, and clapped his hands, well knowing what cord he would jar, although Maud could scarce reply to his invocation with her usual promptness. Gernon's finesse had full effect. The clergyman gave one jump upon

his feet, another round to his tormenter, and stood upright and chattering before him.

"Now, Master Priest—now Master Jesuit, where is your breviary?" still bellowed Gernon, assuming his fiercest looks. "Would you know it if you saw it!" he continued, pulling it out of his pocket, and thrusting it into the priest's face.

"You have raised hand to God's minister—be accursed!" suddenly exclaimed Father James, in a tone as loud as Gernon's, and, under all the circumstances, more appalling than his; and to the increased consternation of all who heard and saw him, the lunatic, summoning his great hidden strength as he spoke these words, raised his own ponderous hand, and with a blow felled the Mayor of Bull-ring to the ground. The next instant, before any one, friend or foe, could stop him, he rushed across the apartment, and shrieking fearfully, hurled himself through the still open window, shattering its glass and frame.

The gentlemen cried out, and hastened to the window; the ladies screamed, joined them, and closed their uplifted hands in horror. Gernon scrambled to get up, commanding his two remaining men (for the person sent to order a comrade to Rory Laherty's hut had not returned) to pursue and seize the fugitive. They went out, and still he strove to arise; but it now appeared that, in addition to the stunning blow he received from the priest, his temple had sustained a severe wound as he fell, from the leg of the table, and after many efforts he again tumbled, dragging the table and all its glasses and bottles along with him. The confused crash caused the company at the window to face round; and once more, one of the ladies, Mistress Louise, screamed slightly, and Mr. Pendergast started. The second door of the apartment was wide open, a group of strange men stood in the darkness beyond it, and the tall and powerful figure of John Johnson, the farmer, was motionless over Gernon, watching him. That instant the eye of the prostrate man met his, and after but one glance of utter surprise, John made a spring upward, with the courage and fierceness of his own deceased Maud.

"It will not avail, Gernon," said the farmer, seizing him round the throat; "you are my prisoner, and necessitated to deliver me up your arms."

"That's *my* bugbear, Mr. Pendergast," whispered Patrick, pointing to Johnson.

"And here comes a dearee o' mine," said John Sharpe, as a man passed him from the hall. "I will not be preceesely bound to declare which of us this pet frightened awhile ago, in

some dark corner of the house," as a second entered.—"Ay, or this jewel,—or this;" two others stepped cautiously by him. —"But yonder, doubtless, comes the poor Priest's hoofed deevil." One of those who stood in the dark, outside the second door of the apartment, entered. "And maybe, is seconded now by the leg, and its fellow, to boot, whilk startled a good year of her life out of Jenny, the maid of the chambers." In fact, without any ostentatious display or much noise, more than half-a-dozen of Johnson's followers unceremoniously took possession of the parlour, ranging themselves around that person. They showed no arms, and their features were as quiet as their proceedings. At the entry of each expected friend, John Sharpe laughed excessively—for him.

All this occurred in a few seconds, during which Johnson and the Captain of the Bachelor boys did not remain unemployed. The latter struggled desperately; the former shook his captive as one would shake a boy, making his heavy accoutrements to rattle, and still saying—"Of no avail, man—surrender, without another word—I do not wish to do you present bodily injury, but surrender you shall, and must. What would you attempt? your carabine lies harmless on the table —your sword lies there—" suddenly drawing it from its scabbard, flinging it aside, and then returning to John's throat the hand that had been employed in the process—"Come, come, Mayor, Captain, and guardian of bachelors, promise to be tractable, or we must make you be so—Blessed mother! can you prove so foolish?" shaking him more angrily and furiously than before, in return for a buffet aimed at his face—"Neighbours, rid me of him till I speak to the company: tie him, but do not hurt him."

"Tie me! who dares it? What neighbours?" questioned Gernon, rolling his eyes around as the obedient men closed upon him:—"Who be these fellows? where my own bachelors?"

"Ye sent the last o' them you had waiting on ye, here, after the Priest, ye ken, hinny," answered Sharpe.

"Boys! bachelor boys!" vociferated Gernon, now vainly struggling in the clutches of Johnson's friends, while Johnson himself stood free of him.

"They hear you, I little doubt," said the farmer, "but, be be assured, cannot heed you. Every soul of them has been quietly secured, outside the house and in it, by this time."

"What? questioned Sharpe, "even the puir lad sent by the Captain, for Rory's piece, to the hut-wood?"

"Even him," answered Johnson, and Sharpe was still amused—"So now, Gernon, content you; and I say again, fear no present hurt from me—in truth, no hurt at any time from me; you are my prisoner, only that I may send you, well guarded, to a well-built jail, for high crimes committed against the laws of the land, man."

"What mean you?" demanded Gernon, turning his glaring eyes on Johnson, from the chair on which he now sat, bound with ropes.

"Yon shall know, if you do not already suspect," replied his captor;—Learn, for the time, however it may surprise your ear, that my only or chief business in repairing to-day to your bull-ring, from a good distance South, was to make you the King's prisoner; and let that information end all present discourse between us.

John Gernon withdrew his eyes to fix them on the floor, and an expression of perplexity and thoughtfulness settled on his face.

"Fair ladies and genteels," resumed Johnson, addressing the more important part of the company, "I, and my poor fellows, could not be without hearing whispered this man's intentions towards all of you, in your quiet house, at your good dinner this evening; and thereupon we thought, that while no place could better suit to make sure of him as our prisoner, we might also do ye a little service in the mean time: so, Mr. Miles Pendergast, a gentleman loved in every heart among us, will forgive our trespass upon his grounds in the twilight, as also our contriving to bestow ourselves, here and there under his roof, for the more securely effecting our good and lawful purposes. And now, before we go, attended by this John Gernon—for indeed we are in haste, as ye may conclude, and bound to be far beyond the interference of the framers of these warrants"—taking them up and tearing them—"ere daybreak—before we go, I say, I wish to [illegible] any farther little service in my power to Mr. Pender[illegible] adopted child, Master Patrick O'Burke, and the [illegible] gentlemen and ladies, his seeming friends, although strangers to me; here lie two small-swords—which is your's, O'Burke's last son?"

Patrick pointed it out. "Take it back, then, from my hand, in token of my honour for the memory of your father, and of love for yourself:—and this must be your friend's—let him receive it from *your* hand.

"Hold, Patrick!" said Pendergast—"and you will excuse me, Mr. Johnson, since, as I can learn, such is your name.

The swords have been surrendered to the warrant of the law, and must not again be touched by us without a breach of the law. 'Tis afflicting, doubtless, to see gentlemen thus disarmed; and had it happened upon Gernon's own violence, I myself would have resisted his endeavours at the time, and I would now encourage my friends to accept the weapons from you, and be thankful accordingly. But, as matters stand, we are bound to decline your courtesy, and submit to legal enactment.—Patrick, do not handle your sword—and you, my friend, I entreat you do not," to Philip Walshe.

Patrick bowed obediently, and the Baron shrugged his shoulders, and turned on his heel.

"Well; I approve your caution, Mr. Pendergast," said Johnson, "and it has sense and foresight in it, for your own sake, as well as for those you exhort to proper submission to the law of the land. And *I* honour the law of the land as much as any man, the which let my proceedings of this evening witness. Wherefore the pretty swords may lie where I found them."

"Thanks," resumed Pendergast—"and I request of you to hear me furthermore. In making a prisoner of John Gernon, you act upon your own discretion, and doubtless well know what you are doing, Mr. Johnson. For us, we have naught to do in the matter—we dreamed not of hindering a deputy of the civil power in the discharge of his duties,—we offered him no hinderance—we gave, and we give you no aid or abetting, and we pray of you and of him to observe the same, now and hereafter."

"I promise faithfully for myself, Mr. Pendergast: as to my prisoner, he is scarce to be depended upon, either as a good witness in the time to come, or even as one whom it may be possible to command, after his commitment to goal at my hands.—But I think the matter may be surer for you. Bring in two of the bold bachelors," he continued, speaking in a loud tone, towards the hall; and some of his own men accordingly led in the witnesses required: "Now, please to repeat your last words, Mr. Pendergast—" that gentleman did so—"Ye hear, ranting lads of single lives and of city courage, and ye will bear evidence to what ye hear, when ye get safe home again: and ye may add to Mr. Pendergast's disavowal, a word from me and from my tenants and helpers;—we admit the not having received any aiding or abetting in this house; we admit the not having asked it, either; nay, we admit, that what we have done, and what we mean to do, has been, and is

and must be, in despite of the owner of the house, his friends, and servants, as much as in despite of your captain, of ye, and of your comrades—so take them out again ;" his new orders were obeyed—" And now, Mr. Pendergast, and fair ladies and gentlemen, still I entreat to know if there remains no little matter in which I may do you a last service ?"

" We thank you, no sir," answered Pendergast.

" We thank ye, yes, friend—asking his Honour's pardon," contradicted John Sharpe. He had gradually advanced from his position at the door-jamb to the spot where Gernon sat bound, and he now spoke from a chair of his own which he had occupied close before the prisoner. " Hearkee, Johnny, pet," he went on, resting his hands on his knees, and stooping forward till their noses almost touched ; " ye won't ride home wi' the hansome small-swords, the even ; nor on the hansome hunter; nor on ane of the pretty jennets ; no, nor wi' the sporting pieces ; nor wi' poor Rory's little pistolet, dearee ; no you won't hinny ; but that's not it ;—by your leave, Johnny —" he put his hand into the pocket of Gernon's leathern breeches, and drew out, first, the purse which Mistress Louise had flung on the table ; and next, the handful of gold laid at Gernon's elbow by Philip Walshe—" See here, Mr. Johnson, sir —is your prisoner to keep this power of yallow money ?"

Johnson demanded an account of the circumstances under which it came into Gernon's possession, and having heard Sharpe's explanation, decided that he certainly was not entitled to retain it.

" I thought as much, your father's own rearing," resumed Sharpe, grinning into Gernon's face.

" It goes back to its lawful owners," said Johnson.

Mistress Louise, with haughty energy, and the young Baron with contemptuous indifference, declared their disinclination to repossess themselves of money which had been given for a certain purpose, and which had purchased its object.

" It's e'en gaun astray then for want of an owner," chuckled John Sharpe, fingering the purse and the loose pieces, where he had appealingly set them down on the table.

" Oh, no," said Johnson, carelessly taking them up—" If Gernon's they are to be, no man but myself has a right to take care of them for him," and he slipped the round sum into his pocket, while Sharpe lost his pleasant expression of face, and eyed the lawgiver studiously.

" And thus my evening's work is fairly done, and I am courteously free to make the most of the night that has closed

on us, and is to follow," continued Johnson, facing our friends in the action of one about to proffer a formal leave-taking.

"Ae moment more, friend," entreated Sharpe, somewhat recovering his recent abstraction—"I dinna find it in my heart to part wi' Johnny one say unsaid; and here it is, Johnny; the mass fines, dearee—the seventy-eight pounds, hinney,—*that*'s not in your pocket, is it?"

"But it shall be, or in the pocket of any accredited person who demands it in the name of the authority which John Gernon cited in the levying it," said Mr. Pendergast,—"My visiters here assent to as much upon their own accounts. I promise to be accountable for the portions of the fine incurred by Patrick O'Burke and my late gamekeeper; and I notice you, once more, John Gernon, that in nothing do we, of our own accord, gainsay the word of the law."

"A good and loyal speech to close with, Mr. Pendergast," said Johnson;—"And yet," he continued, in a low voice, approaching his seemingly unwilling host, "although all this caution may screen yourself, to-morrow morning, I would counsel you not to leave a single Popish friend of yours to abide the questioning of our present and lately-past adventures under your honest roof, in the first light of that coming morning. You understand me, sir; so, enough. Our farewells come on at last.—Men, follow me with the prisoner.—Mr. Miles Pendergast, a good night."

"Before you go," interrupted Pendergast, "assist us in finding Mr. James, I pray you."

"He has already been looked after," answered Johnson, "but to no purpose; and, credit me, you are little likely to see him again on Northern ground, if his legs continue the good friends to him that, as I can hear, they were after his jump through the window. But again I recommend you, sir, to offer your present guests—(and I deem I may extend the warning to your sometime gamekeeper, and even your Protestant steward, so remarkable for his abetting of Papists to-night)—no beds under your hospitable protection; yet, do as you prefer."

"Horses for all, if needful, will be left in the stables?" asked Pendergast.

"Their own horses, sir—how can you question it? I speak of your adopted son and his friends; your two servants may also find themselves supplied. As for me and my neighbours, John Gernon's dismounted bachelors will yield him and me, and them, the means of a night ride southward."

"But those said men you speak of—how are they to be answered for?" still demanded Pendergast; and while he spoke, there was a doubtful and alarmed expression in his eye.

"Fear not that one will be missing," Johnson replied; "not a hair of a man's head has been hurt; you will only find them all tied neck and heels, at different distances from each other, in various holes and corners of your house and your grounds. Look for them, and cut their cords when it pleases you," he whispered; "though I do not believe it will be until after your friends are mounted and off.—And now, a third time, if not a fourth, farewell to this fair and noble company." He bowed all but gracefully: there was only a nameless something between his late and present manner and that of acknowledged gentility.—"Gernon, you will be close by me on the road."

"The road?" questioned Gernon—"if you think to give a face of truth to your words; and if, indeed, I have done ought to make me punishable by the laws of the land, why not carry me straight into the town, and deliver me over to the legal authorities thereof?"

"Suppose your offence not to have been committed within their jurisdiction, Gernon?" in his turn questioned Johnson; "and, farther, suppose your friends too many there, and mine too few; but, content you, I say, upon the word of an honest man, my conduct shall be lawfully decorous towards you in all things—even yourself, John, will not complain of it to your father-confessor—your chaplain I mean—while the crowd are gathered to see your last exhibition.—Carry him carefully between ye," he added, to his men, and walked out of the parlour.

His submissive attendants quickly executed his commands. Gernon was lifted out now unresisting, and with him and his bearers all the strangers left the apartment.

An involuntary pause and silence ensued between the company they quitted, who did not even consult each other's eyes, until a clatter and galloping of horses was heard outside the house, dying gradually away at a distance. Then Mr. Pendergast, flinging himself in a chair, cried, "Very, very strange!" Lady Dorcas looked smiling at Patrick; Rory Laherty's lamentations were distinctly uttered; and John Sharpe's chuckle, and the Baron of Crana's indifferent, and yet mocking laugh, responded to his impotent cries.

"And what's to be proceeded with now?" inquired Lady Dorcas.

"Why, I think, Paddy O'Burke must say yes to our invitation to the old castle, whether he will or no," said her brother.

"That must be it," agreed Pendergast, as if his own anxious thoughts had been spoken for him.

"And without waiting for the morning, as that strange fellow said," pursued the Baron.

"Assuredly; he and you, and even your ladies, Baron of Crana, must to horse upon the instant—alone, I manage matters as I can," said Pendergast,—"Patrick,"—he beckoned his hand to his protegé, walking to a desk in a remote quarter of the room—"we part suddenly, Patrick, after many years of living together; but I may see you soon, or hear from you—till when, take that." He put a little bag of gold in Patrick's hand—"and that,"—embracing him—"son of your father, I am your friend still."

While, with broken and low words, Patrick fitly made answer to this parting address, a loud shout arose from Rory Laherty, who had squatted himself in Priest James's corner, and he demanded was he to be left behind? Patrick's assurances relieved him.

"I'se e'en gae also," John Sharpe was heard to snuffle," as Protestant protector and guardian to the lad, for ae journey, provided that his honour, my master, allows of the same."

"Do so, John; you may chance, indeed, to be of use to the friendless boy; but I will reckon upon your speedy return to me with an account of his safe housing in Crana castle—and now let some of us to the stables?"

CHAPTER XVI.

The dawn of the next morning saw all our friends, except Pendergast, a good distance from those of whom they had present cause to stand in some distrust. At a miserable village of poor fishers on the coast, they stopped to rest their horses and themselves, and were supplied with a breakfast of oaten cakes, milk, eggs, and smuggled brandy. Rory Laherty unwisely declaimed for an instant against the difficulty of making way through the staple bread of the Northern province, and placed it in contrast with the pliable potatoes and boiled beans of the South; but John Sharpe soon arrested his criti-

cism, calling him an uncivilized poor creature, who was not entitled to deliver an opinion on any such subject, and extolling the superiority of oaten cake over every species of food the South could produce.

Refreshed with a little sleep, as well as with their primitive meal, the travellers again betook themselves to their horses before noon. During the hard ride of the night, little conversation had been interchanged between any of them; the urgency of the flight, and the dreariness of the road, together operating to keep the whole of the party almost silent. Now, in the cheering beams of an unclouded though not fierce autumnal sun, and accompanied in their way by interesting scenery, sometimes sea or coast views, sometimes as seemingly inland as if they travelled through the middle of the kingdom, their spirits revived, and they discoursed freely.

Their friend John Johnson, and all connected with him which had come under their observation, was their chief topic; and Philip of Crana and Lady Dorcas were particularly curious to learn still more of that person; more, indeed, than it seemed at present possible they could learn from Patrick O'Burke, to whom they addressed their questions. Like his patron, Mr. Pendergast, he had never even heard of Johnson before his appearance at the bull-ring; and of his charge against Gernon, or his real motive for making the guardian of bachelors a prisoner, and running away with him, Patrick could form no idea.

John Sharpe, riding close behind his betters, had not as yet offered an opinion on the subject, because, as it appeared, no one had consulted him. At last, in answer to an indifferent appeal from Patrick, he dryly and testily replied, "And how could John gi' a guess?—an auld naething of a body, ye ken; troth, jest;" but, as it seemed that he *could* give a guess notwithstanding, or at least thought he could, his ill humour was conciliated on all hands, and finally he gruffly condescended to instruct his hearers.

And very strange and vague insinuations he did hazard upon the matter, and in a very peculiar way did he commence the delivery of his oracles.

John Sharpe first asked Patrick if he had never heard whispered that John Gernon's pocket was seldom empty, although no one could tell how he contrived to fill it? Having been answered in the affirmative, rather to save a lengthened proof of the fact than from any particular knowledge of it—for, in truth, Patrick's retired life left him few opportunities of

hearing much city gossip—Sharpe proposed a second question.

"And maybe ye'll never have heard either, that Johnny, the dearee, was in the practice of vanishing frae his bachelor boys ance or twice the year, and spending a week, or maybe a month, or maybe twa months, somewhere or other, apast their skill to find out?"

To this also, Patrick assented, upon the same grounds which had yielded his former admission.

"Vera weel, then. Now, wha is the mon called John Johnson?" asked Sharpe.

"Why, that's the very thing we are all curious to know, good Mr. Steward," said Lady Dorcas.

"Belike, your leddyship. But, wi' your leave, Master O'Burke will make answer til me this time also. Ye'll be thinking he is ae bird o' your ane flock, sir?"

"What mean you, man?" questioned Patrick, in great surprise and a little anger.

"Nae offence, nae offence til your ould het Irish bluid, Master Patrick; but I mean a Papist."

"Oh, is that all? To be sure, he is a Catholic—he must be; witness his conduct before the market-cross." In this opinion the Baron and his sister confidently concurred.

"Well, maybe so; and he is, just for peace sake, if so you and your friends, Master O'Burke, will have it til be; for my ane sel, I make bould til say naething, only this—John Johnson is as much of a Papist the morn, or was yesterday, as John Sharpe is or was—the Lord shield him frae ony such falling off!" the speaker's late angry notions of forsaking his old faith was obliterated by his more recent and still unsubdued testiness against what he had chosen to consider as neglect of him, on the part of his Catholic fellow-travellers.

Laughing slightly and tolerantly at the insinuation contained in his pious prayer, the party still pressed him to vouchsafe an explanation.

"Oh, of a certainty, and to the best of my skill; and why not, as in duty bound, at the will of the grandees, the world over." Good humoured as had been their laugh, it did not add to his amiable mood. "Master O'Burke, you rock o' sense, I'll be talking til you agin. There's such people living as the Johnsons o' the Fews, I believe."

"Yes, John; I have heard of that courageous family," answered Patrick.

"And what of them, if it please you, sir?"

"Why, that they are the most daring pursuers and takers of Rapparees in all Ireland; that they have already made prisoners of many of Randal Oge O'Hagan's gang; and for some time have been hoot-foot from the North to the South, and back again, after Randal himself. The high price offered for his head (on his shoulders or off), by Government, being supposed to quicken their zeal and adventure."

"See there, then!" remarked Sharpe, and was silent.

Patrick entreated him to conclude, but he only smiled contemptuously, asking, "And ye canna mak' it out, a'tween ye, yet, grandees? ye canna jest tack that and that thegether? Uh, hu."

"Do you mean, John, that our friend is one of the noted thief-catching family?" continued Patrick.

"Maybe I don't; why should I? Little it becomes ane like me to mean onything."

"He assents," whispered Patrick to his friends. "Well, John, if such be the case, he must needs be a good Protestant, as all his race, root and branch, are."

"Believe it, believe it, hinny."

"But why, then, pretend to be a Catholic yesterday, at the bull-ring?"

"Ask him, Master O'Burke."

"And more especially last night, at Pendergast Hall? for surely his proffer of our swords to the Baron of Crana and myself, with other things, could only be meant to show an interest in us, that might pass for the interest of a fellow-believer?"

"Ask him, ask him, I say til you again, sir;—do; and maybe he'd tell you; ane thing is certain, he can if so he likes;—ay, and anither thing is jest as certain—nae one can tell ye for him—nae leeving creature, unless a brother, or a cousin o' his, or his father, maybe. I am not gaun to attempt a satisfaction for your questions, Master O'Burke; it's apast my skill and schooling; natheless, I am content to think, that whatever a Johnson does upon one of his plans for trapping a Rapparee, may turn out to have a reason in it after a'—troth, jest;—they dinna pass for fules, nae mair than for men of low stature, or narrow shouthers, the whole kith and kin of them, thae Johnsons; but have as mony turns in their heads, and as mony shifts and expedients, as the born Rapparees they spend their lives in hunting down—ay, as Randal Oge O'Hagan his ain sel', though that's a big word in their praise."

John Sharpe certainly sketched with a faithful hand, in his

own style, the characters of the celebrated family of the Johnsons of the Fews, who indeed, about this time, formed themselves into a kind of self elected police for apprehending Rapparees all over Ireland, but particularly in the North. They lived near Carlingford Bay, upon or close to the junction of three counties, those of Down, Armagh, and Louth, the latter a Leinster county; and so were well situated for a sortie, at a short notice, in any direction of the country, against the flitting objects of their laudable hostility. Athletic, brave, and men of much mental shrewdness and cleverness, and withal a numerous clan, they were accounted public blessings in those times, when bad roads, and an imperfect system of civil jurisdiction, left the traveller at the mercy of numerous bands of such freebooters as they waged war against. Indeed, the Rapparees feared no other foes. Of the detachments of soldiers occasionally sent against them, under the control of a sheriff or of a magistrate, they made very little account; but for the Johnsons of the Fews, whose knowledge of the country was equal to their own, and whose spirit of enterprise, sagacity in pursuit, and ingenuity in counter contrivances to effect an arrest, much resembled their own, the wild banditti entertained and admitted much honourable respect. It may be added, that the seemingly patriotic corps of thief-catchers found their account in this self-devotion in upholding the laws of the land; for scarce a Rapparee's head but was worth money; and, as Patrick O'Burke has intimated in the case of Randal Oge O'Hagan, upon the heads of the more daring of their chiefs, prices had been fixed to almost an enormous amount.

Patrick O'Burke continued his interrogatories to his attendant.

"So, John, having made a good case of identity in favour of our new acquaintance, at your own will and pleasure, let us pass to inquire into the nature of his displeasure against poor John Gernon. Beforehand, however, allow me a last question touching himself, namely;—Is it only because his name is Johnson, that you set him down as one of the Fews-men?"

"Maybe I have anither reason; maybe no," answered Sharpe; "who knows?"

"If you have another, I pray you acquaint me with it."

"Oh, it will prove of nae importance, belike."

"No matter,—declare it."

"Why then, jest this, Master Patrick—he happened til tell me who he was his ain sel'."

"When—where, for Heaven's sake!"

"From ahint a door, in the lower regions of Pendergast Hall," answered Sharpe.

"And last night? as you remained out of the parlour in search of the lights?"

"Even sae, Master O'Burke; by the same token, a cousin of his was at his side when he gave me the whisper, jest to keep my tongue atween my teeth and mak' nae noise, but let him do his ain work, according to his ain liking."

"You surprise me now, in truth, John. Why I chanced on him myself, in another part of the house, and he gave me no such confidential explanation."

"You had too much sense for it, may be, Master Patrick; 'tis fules are put to roast eggs, ye ken.'

"I must compliment you, John, on your own humility, and thank you for the sincerity of the flattery you address to me. That past, let us both try to comprehend fully the case before us. It grows into something terrible, I swear! Here, as I conclude, you would have a Johnson of the Fews making a prisoner of the poor Mayor of Bull-ring, just in the natural discharge of his usual vocation."

"Ah! aha! and ye 'll be beginning to put things in a string will ye, Master O'Burke?"

"Why then, John Sharpe, the next thing to go in a string is his—Gernon is a Rapparee!"

"And the next after that, will be his ain sel' anent being found out for ane—troth, jest."

"Again I ask you, have you more than your own fancies for the opinion?

"Fancies, Master Patrick? I am ower ould to fill my head wi' fancies, I hope."

"Well, well—more than your own excellent judgment?"

"Yes, then; a wee bit more."

"Johnson's own assertion once again?"

"Or ae thing very like til it, I am thinking."

Patrick looked at his friends, and they at him, in much interest."

"And it's very unlikely," continued Sharpe, "that Johnson would tell me a lee for nae reason under the clouds, at that moment; more be token, canna ye bring til your mind, Master O'Burke, any support for his words out of the opening of our discourse on this matter?"

"No truly, John," answered Patrick, after a pause; for Sharpe's preparatory propositions had, indeed, passed but lightly over him.

"I was e'en guessing as much," said John.

"Let me try," volunteered Lady Dorcas; "First, Mr. Steward, you called on us to notice that John Gernon's purse used ever to be filled, no one could surmise how."

"That's like some o't, of a truth," agreed Sharpe.

"Second, that he was in the habit of disappearing from his native town for weeks and months at a time, no one could surmise whither."

"Richt—vera richt, your leddyship, nae matter where *ye* had your schooling," he continued, glancing disprovingly at Patrick.

"And now I draw my conclusions from these two facts, and what you have since said—Gernon filled his purse by Torying it, in disguise, about our peaceable land, and was so employed during his absence, now and then, from before the eyes of his jolly bachelors—praise me, sir, if my reading is still right."

"I only mak' bould til say," he replied, "that I could pray to the Lord other folk had your leddyship's woman's wit.—And now, genteels, I have but ae word mair til throw in, and believe it wha likes; and til save idle questioning, I give notice that what I am gaun til deliver *is* my ain 'fancy,' if so it pleases ony o' my betters til use the word agin: whilk is as much as if I said that the discovery has been made in my ain noddle, and without help or hint frae John Johnson, or ae mon, woman, or bairn, on the face o' the 'arth; and now—answer me wha can—what have I in my mind til speak out, amang ye?"—and John Sharpe glanced from one to another of his hearers with an expression of in-felt sagacity, joined to his usual importance.

"I confess to you, John, I cannot imagine," said Patrick, in a grave, self-accusing manner.

"Nor I," echoed Philip Walshe.

"*I* do not answer till Master Sharpe gives us all one little chance for a guess," laughed Lady Dorcas; "Pray oblige us, sir—whatever you are going to say relates to John Gernon, does it?"

"Well; and it does," assented Sharpe, "and there now—I ge' ye a' that chance."

"Still I gain no ray of light," rejoined Patrick.

"Sows' ears and purses," muttered Sharpe, half loth to trust himself upon the proverb at length, but he thought it over, bitterly—"hard to mak' a purse out o' a sow's ear."

"Perhaps all honest John's warrants and what not, yesterevening, were but waste paper," surmised the Baron; "and but came to rob us of our swords and money, in a genteel way *à la* Randal Oge O'Hagan?"

"Better to say so much than to say naething at a', it shows there's some warking in the brain-pan," answered John, again looking chidingly at Patrick, who it need scarce be added, enjoyed with his friends, John's election of himself into the office of Mentor of his master's adopted son—"Natheless, ye have not shot near till the mark yet, Baron. The Leddy Dorcas will tell us her notion."

"John Gernon is somebody else!" suddenly exclaimed Lady Dorcas in assumed energy of manner, and indeed only speaking at random.

"My beauty you war! my pet you war!" responded Sharpe, in real excitement and delight, and surprised into some habitual phrases of familiarity, by his sincere admiration of the fair sibyl's superior intellect.

"John Gernon is—Randal Oge O'Hagan his own self!" she continued.

"His ain sel', by the pipe between my teeth," asseverated Sharpe, changing his manner into a solemnity suited to his subject, and his oath.

Lady Dorcas, infected by his earnest seriousness, also restrained her smiles and laughing raillery, and seemed afraid of the truth of her own jesting thought; and her brother and friend again glanced at each other, while again there was silence.

After a moment's consideration, however, Philip Walshe laughed incredulously, and pronounced the fact quite improbable, and Patrick agreed with him.

"Though you have given us a moment's fright, John," added the latter, "still I am inclined to apply to this new divination of your's, the word you allowed us to use, if deemed needful, when you should have said your say."

John was, however, positive in his own opinion, and supported it at some length, though in his usual grumbling style. In the first place, he wished his incredulous listeners to observe, that the person called Randal Oge O'Hagan had never been heard of in the North, or any where else, till within the last five or six years; and his first fame spread abroad at that time, just when Gernon was emerging from boyhood into manhood, and deprived, or depriving himself of all lawful and visible means of gaining a shilling. John Sharpe's next point was, that the freebooter never was known to be in the North, without its being also known that Gernon was absent on one of his mysterious excursions. He added, that immediately before the last bull-baiting, the feats of Randal Oge rung far and wide, in the vicinity of the town and country the travellers had just left, and

precisely at the same period of time, the Mayor of Bull-ring and guardian of bachelors was not to be seen among his old friends.

Patrick replied to this case of presumptive evidence, that, so far, Gernon's connexion with Randal Oge's gang might seem likely; but that he could be the outlaw himself, remained as improbable as ever. Many well-known personal characteristics of Randal, compared with all of those as well-known of Gernon, made the conjecture go for nothing. The one was talked of, even by the little children of the country, as a gay, light-mannered, gallant, and generous individual; the other's gayety went no farther than sottishness,—and of his surly, dogged manner, and of his claim to gallantry and generosity, the late adventures of the bull-ring and his visit to Pendergast Hall gave a satisfactory account. The very popular portrait of Randal Oge, limned by each tongue that spoke of him, had not a trait of Gernon's heavy features, short stature, and bandy legs; and the Captain of the Bachelors' company was even too young to pretend to identify with the flower of the Tories, and the king of romantic highwaymen.

John Sharpe met all this by asking one or two questions. What proof was there that the popular notions of Randal Oge's moral and personal attributes were true notions? Might not the idle gossip of the fire-side shape for itself an imaginary portrait of that celebrated hero? Might he not have taken measures himself to circulate erroneous ideas on the subject, in order to divert observation from the real features of his mind and person, that so he could pass unknown and undetected in the presence of individuals to whom he might have reasons not to become known?

"Very well argued, John," resumed Patrick; "Yet again hear me. The lips of even his sworn enemies—and those are not a few—have never accused Randal Oge of a blood-stained hand. If he cannot rob a traveller without certainty of a deadly struggle, he will not attack him at all. Now, God forgive me if I wrong Gernon, but I do not believe so nice a daintiness of human life is in his habits or his nature. 'Tis also certainly said of the bold Rapparee, if any thing is certainly said of him, that never has he plundered the poor man of his shilling. Nay, you do not forget his still more generous conduct to our poor neighbour Richard Langley?"

"What was it? tell it! tell it!" craved Lady Dorcas.

"Richard Langley," continued Patrick, "went to the fair with his own cow. She died on the road-side. A man came

up to him, while, doubtless, he cried over her some variation of 'Drimendhoo, why did you die?'—and hearing his story, and his despairing avowals of not having now a hope or a prospect in the world, the stranger offered to lend him five pounds for a year. 'You must pay it back, Richard, the day and the hour,' he said, 'and you must put it under this flat stone,' pointing to one in the hedge; and so he left him. Richard Langley, again growing prosperous on the use of the money, did repair to the same spot that day twelve months, and did leave five pounds under the flat stone. Scarcely had he turned his back to walk home, when the stranger jumped over the hedge, lifted up the money, called after him, and said,—'Stop, Richard Langley; you are an honest man, and deserve a reward for your honesty. Here are the five pounds again, and five more along with them, not as a loan, but as a gift; and if any one asks you whom you have seen here, tell them Randal Oge,'—and Randal was out of sight in an instant."

"Oh, how I do love you, Randal Oge!" said Lady Dorcas: "and yes, yes, 'tis impossible that the dark-browed Gernon could ever do an action like it."

"So I say," answered Patrick; "and to show as much, I made mention of the story."

But no reasoning, no illustration could shake John Sharpe's faith in the belief he had imposed upon himself. Randal Oge might have acted towards Richard Langley, as Richard declared he had done, merely for a purpose, and such a one as John had before explained to his company. If it had never appeared that Randal had shed blood, perhaps the wild and lonely hill-sides, could they speak, might tell another tale. And then the conversation of the travellers continued till towards evening, when some adventures of the road put John Sharpe in possession of stronger proofs of the soundness of his own judgment than his incredulous companions had deemed possible, and at the same time, led to circumstances which concerned the fate and fortunes of the whole party.

CHAPTER XVII.

From the moment he left Pendergast-hall, the Baron of Crana's straightest road to his own castle was the most directly southern one he could have taken. He preferred, however, an eastern course in the first instance, both because it would be less open to suspicion, in case of pursuit by the offended authorities, whose warrants had been disregarded under Mr. Pendergast's roof, and because, finding himself in the North, he was strongly disposed to make a visit to the Earl of Antrim, a friend of his deceased father, and who had been connected, like him, with the unsuccessful party in the late Civil war. And the proposed visit was not limited, in Philip Walshe's views, merely to a cultivation of the Earl's good will; in fact, he had some misgivings of the chances of a journey through a province distinguished for its zeal against all persons of his creed, and he felt inclined to approach, day by day, towards the residence of a friendly and powerful nobleman, who, in case of need, might promptly reply to an appeal for protection.

Hence our travellers have appeared moving Eastward, within view of the Northern coast of Ireland, upon the first day of their journey. Towards sunset, the road struck more inland, leading them to the town of Colerain, which they entered with some doubts of being allowed to pass quietly through it. Owing to John Sharpe's orthodox accent, however, and his making good use of it, in ordering, reprehending, and controlling every body and every thing, they once more emerged into the open country without molestation, and even much the better of the larder, cookery, and wine-cellar of the inn at which they rested.

Some miles outside the town, the road divided, running, at the left-hand, close by the coast, and at the right, still continuing a little way inland. The travellers pursued their way to the right.

After proceeding a few miles farther, they saw four horsemen riding hard against them down a descent of the road, at a good distance. These persons did not wear military attire, yet the sinking sun flashed upon the scabbards of swords which hung from their hips. The attention of our party became fixed; John Sharpe was the first to hint that he did not quite

like the aspect of the armed strangers, and, under all the circumstances, it was quickly decided that they should be avoided, if possible. True, exclusive of Lady Dorcas and Mistress Louise, the travellers were numerous enough to withstand a challenge from four horsemen, of whatever kind they might prove to be; the Baron, Patrick, John Sharpe, Rory Laherty, and the Baron's two attendants, made up six good men; but they had no weapons; and, moreover, broils of every kind were best avoided when ladies were to be protected.

This determination was taken as all halted at the angle of a narrow and broken road to their left, in fact, the termination of the coast-road, now sweeping into the more inland one, which they had declined pursuing at its commencement. some miles outside Colerain. At present, however, it seemed very opportune for their purpose, and as the approaching riders became momentarily lost to view by a curve of the highway before them, they wheeled rapidly upon it, and put their horses to full speed.

It will be observed, that in consequence of this movement, they re-approached Colerain by a line nearly parallel to that which had led them from the town. The neglected state of the present narrow road, full of inequalities, and strewed with stones, did not long permit their horses to make rapid progress; and John Sharpe often listened for the sounds of pursuit in their rear. No one appeared to be coming on from behind, and the fugitives slackened their reins, and, deeming that they had unnecessarily alarmed themselves, began to think of retracing their steps, and continuing their journey eastward. Still they slowly moved in an opposite direction, at an undecided pace.

Hitherto they had been winding to the coast from the inland road, between swells of land which shut out every other object, save the sky. Suddenly, the way grew steep, and making an angle in the middle of its descent, placed them before a scene so striking, that, with exclamations of surprise and pleasure, all stood still to contemplate it. To the right, at but a very little distance, the coast terminated in a gigantic mass of rock, falling almost perpendicularly into the waves, its summit more than a hundred feet above them. Upon this rock, covering nearly its whole extent, arose the ruins of an old castle, of which the rent and shivered gables and chimneys presented the most fantastic forms. Behind them spread the sea. Crossing their many pointed top-out-line,l ike a vapour, ran a narrow

tongue of brownish land, in the middle distance. Above this, and much farther off—a fore-shortened expanse of water parting both—floated an irregularly conical hill, from the right-hand termination of which, flowed the horizontal line of the ocean. And down upon that line, the autumn sun was sinking in unclouded power, casting over it his radiance, till their remained but a golden dream of a division between the heavens and the waters; onward, across the washed waves, rolled his effluent splendour, heightened by the reflection of the sky, which he had already turned into glory; and against this dazzling glow, savagely started up the huge perpendicular rock and crowded fragments of the ancient castle, both in deepest shadow, except where fierce beams came bursting in through a window-hole, a rent, or a broken doorway,—the ragged outline of points and shatters, all cutting blackly and sharply against the sheet of living light.

"Yon's auld Dunluce," said John Sharpe, breaking silence, after the party had for some time regarded the scene,—"the chief castle of the ancient Irish M'Quillans, till ane o' the Scottish clan, M'Donald, took it frae them wi' the strong hand."

"The cunning hand, rather, John Sharpe," said Patrick O'Burke; and John's ancestral pride was rising, and an antiquarian and historical debate had like to have been the result between him and his ward, when matters more immediately important interfered to prevent it.

Down to the road, at the back of the travellers, swept a descent of crumbling soil and rock, scantily spotted with vegetation, from the summit of which they heard a sturdy shout; and, turning their eyes, they saw two of the horsemen, whom they had lately avoided, there standing still, but making signs to them to remain where they were, as if for a parley. Then the strangers looked behind, and again shouted; in a few moments were joined by their comrades; and, finally, the four riders plunged boldly towards the broken road, and gained it at a point between our friends and Colerain.

"They 'll be a few o' Randal Oge's dearees," muttered John Sharpe, "and winna leave ane o' us a cross to bless oursels on."

The foremost horseman drew near, and gave his new acquaintances a manly, easy, and yet not cordial salutation. He was a powerful-bodied man, with strong but not ruffianly features, and he wore pistols in the rude belt, from which was ap-

pended the large trooper's sword at his hip. His horse seemed as powerful and as resolute as himself: his three companions and their steeds were models of both.

John Sharpe hastened to answer his salutation, and he did so in a style not a whit less off-hand and distant than that in which it had been given. Previous to his taking upon him the office of spokesman, he commanded all his friends to be silent and stand together, while he should strive to parley for them.

"Well, friend," resumed the stranger, "ye'll be on the road from the bull-baiting Westward yesterday, though your horse's head is not at present turned the straight way home."

"And if we were at the bull-baiting Westward yesterday, what then, friend?" demanded John Sharpe, in his turn.

"A civil question or two, and nothing more," answered his catechist, surveying observantly the group at his back.

"If that's a', speer awa', friend,—civeelity begets civeelity, ye ken."

"Thanks; but first a word nearer home: you and your company were bound Eastward awhile ago?"

"Maybe we were; Eastward, or Westward, or Northward, or Southward, or any ither ward ye like, or rather that we like our ain sels, according til the fancy of free and loyal men and subjacts, in a free land."

"Doubtless,—why did you all wheel off o' the main road, to lose time upon this by-way?"

"Why have ye—your ain sel' and the little dearees at your back—jest done the same thing, galloping down the hill, yon, like born deevils, to tak' up mair of our time, and spend your ain?" counter-questioned Sharpe.

"You are a cross-grained, cranky-headed old fellow, I'm thinking," said the stranger, with a smile.

"And suppose I am?" still demanded John Sharpe, looking sourer than before.

"Oh, nothing, as I have said, but the few civil questions touching the bull-baiting; for, assuredly, my cousins and I ought to be friends with you and your company, though we did not suppose so when you chose to avoid us upon the good road over the hill, yon."

"Follow your ain mind, mon; jest freends or foes, as you like it; but thae questions anent the bull-baiting maun be put til us in the contrary way frae some ye have already asked, afore we call them ceevil, as you promised they should be."

"Well, I'll mind my tongue and my manners, to pleasure you, sir; and now, hoping that neither will give you new

offence, I pray you inform me if there was any talk of Randal Oge O'Hagan among the people at yesterday's sport?"

John Sharpe fixed his angular, red-edged, scowling little gray eyes on the man, as he replied—"Nae word—but there *was* some talk of ae freend o' his—freend, the wrong way—ye ken wha and what I mean, hinny."

"You mean a Johnson, do you?"

"Troth, jest—every inch of a Johnson."

"He appeared at Bull-ring?"

"You may say that, dearee; aye, and mak' your ain o' it; and ye can throw a guess at my mind again, I' thinking."

"Did you chance to hear his Christian name?"

"Maybe not; maybe it isn't—John!"

"You must be right then, by the Fews and the clouds over it!—Boys!" turning eagerly to his companions, "here are tidings of John. He *did* take the scent we supposed he would. This honest gentleman reports his appearance at the bull-baiting.—Thanks, friends, thanks; and let us now hope you can add to your good news, by informing us of his road, after the day's game?"

John Sharpe's suspicions of having to deal with a detachment of Randel Oge's gang were at once overthrown by this seemingly natural frankness, which appeared to include almost a declaration of the very different identity of the strangers.

"Why, the twa horned deevil?" he exclaimed, in growing glee; "ye'll not turn out til be John's brothers and cousins in guid earnest, will ye?"

"To a stanch loyal party, like you and your company, the truth need not be denied—we are Fews-men, every mother's son of us; and more than that, here, so far North, hot after Master Randal Oge O'Hagan, who has but lately slipped through our fingers in the South, and as we can learn on good authority, is now abroad among your hills, though by stealth, as his gang is not at present strong, and he waits for reinforcements."

"I'll mak' a wager wi' you, mon," said John Sharpe, grinning in self-important delight, and stretching out his hand.

"With all my heart;" his proffered hand was accepted, and shaken till he winced.—"But touching what?"

"That he's *not* abroad amang our hills," answered Sharpe.

"He—who? Randal Oge O'Hagan?"

"Troth, jest—Randal Oge O'Hagan, the pet."

"No! where then? I repeat that my information is of good authority."

"And sae let it have been, but 'tis a thing gone by. Ye had nae accounts o' Master Randal later than yasterday."

"There I agree—well?"

"Ane met wi' him yesterday at e'en."

"Ay! and that one my brother Jack?"

"Troth, and I 'm e'en o' your mind;" and thereupon, John Sharpe gave a brief account of Gernon's having been taken prisoner in Pendergast's house—Gernon, who he would swear was Randal Oge—by the brother of his new friend. But while he spoke, every matter was cautiously and craftily suppressed which could disclose to the loyal Rapparee-hunters the religious creed of John's present companions of the road.—"And what 'll be your ain Christian name, dearee?" was the question with which he concluded his narrative.

"Pat," replied the man;—"and there's Daniel for you," pointing behind him, "and Isaac, and Ben—every boy a Johnson. But now, no time is to be lost in coming on John's track, and learning how true may be your information. If indeed he has Randal Oge in hand, I little wonder at his marching him a day's journey or so, before he would commit him, into some neighbourhood well acquainted with the Rapparee's doings—this very county of Antrim would, however, suffice; so Heaven only knows how near we may be to them. Once again, before parting, can you guess the route they may have taken from Pendergast Hall?"

John Sharpe, after a reflective pause, answered that Gernon's captor had more than once spoken of starting upon a directly Southern course, and that therefore, in all probability, he had not entered the county of Antrim at all.

"The South road, then, will be along the banks of the Mourne, through Strabane, Clogher, and Monaghan, into Meath or Louth?" questioned Pat Johnson, turning round to his namesakes; they concurred in his opinion: and with renewed thanks to Sharpe, and a bow to his company, the four thief-catchers forthwith spurred their horses up the eminence by which they had descended to the road, and disappeared over it.

"No; I know naething—nae ane thing under the sky—how could I? Our John Johnson was not a Few's man—no, to be sure—how could he? And Johnny Gernon *is* Johnny Gernon, and nae body else. Oh, very well, and so be it, for peace sake, and amen." Such were Sharpe's self-praising ejaculations, as all watched the disappearance of the horsemen.

"The first fact is proved, I admit you, John," answered Patrick; "we await your proof of the second."

"Well, Master O'Burke, maybe it might come—who knows? Wait a wee bit."

"Though," continued Patrick, in his own mind, "even of that very first fact I can scarce help new doubts;" and he revolved this thought, in consequence of having seen, or of suspecting that he had seen, a face very like John Johnson's own peeping for an instant, during the latter part of the dialogue between Sharp and the police of the Fews, through one of the windows of the ruins of Dunluce Castle; and if he had been right in his conjecture, why should a brother of Pat Johnson, and a cousin at least of the three other Johnsons, conceal himself from his and their observation?

An explanation of his doubts was soon proposed to Patrick. While the Baron of Crana debated with John Sharpe the question of insuring good and near quarters from the coming night—the recent occurrences having put it out of the travellers' power now to gain the resting-point proposed upon leaving Colerain—a man appeared standing on one of the splintered pinnacles of the ruin, and making signs to attract their notice. The circumstance of his being opposed to the light behind him, as was the mass of building he overtopped, left his features less distinct, even at the distance he was from the spectators, than in another situation they would have been; moreover, the excessive glow of evening was now beginning to yield to the first tender shade of twilight; and yet, Patrick again believed he saw John Gernon's captor.

Having succeeded in fixing the attention of the travellers, the figure disappeared from its remarkable position, amid the lower intricacies of the ruin.

"And what must needs be, now? and wha the deevil was you?" questioned Sharpe. As he spoke, the same figure a second time became visible, from among a cluster of nearer ruins, which might be said to form almost the foreground of the picture already sketched; and as soon as he now showed himself, neither Patrick nor any of his friends made a question of who he was.

"Hasten from the road!" he cried, in an earnest, yet constrained voice, after glancing warily around him—"I saw the whole affair—you have been imposed upon, and are in danger from the return of those people—hasten, hasten, and you shall know more—dismount, and lead your horses towards me—I will meet ye yet a few steps farther—" and he jumped laugh-

ing and saying—"What a take-in! what barefaced raps!"—clear of the broken walls around him, and trod firmly up a green ascent which led to the level of the road.

In much astonishment, perplexity, but full of confidence, our travellers disposed themselves to comply with his directions. The gentlemen and their attendants quickly dismounted; then Lady Dorcas, and the silent, reserved, but most observant Mistress Louise, were assisted from their saddles; and all stepped from the unfenced road, the servants leading the horses, to present themselves for the promised explanation. John Sharpe's puzzled mutterings were audible.

"Ladies fair, and gentles, both, a second good evening," resumed John Johnson, bowing with an air—"but before we can speak farther, in safety, please to follow me." He turned round the way he had come, and, according to his invitation, was closely followed by our party, over much uneven ground, strewn with stones, and wild with tall weeds, into the nearer group of ruins, just alluded to: "and now, admire your situation first of all," he continued.

Between them and the great road upon which stood the remains of the castle of Dunluce, appeared a chasm of considerable depth, so that, with the sea girding its other sides, and this dry abyss cutting it off from the main land, the rock and its extensive ruins seemed completely isolated; and Lady Dorcas, remembering John Johnson's first manifestation of himself upon one of the points of the latter, exclaimed after a glance around her—"But you came to us from the castle! How?"

"As thus, Madam," he answered, moving from the place where he stood; and springing off terra-firma upon the top of a narrow wall, which, rudely arched underneath, formed the sole approach to the principal ruin, and which the visiters had not before perceived, in the increasing twilight. Across this perilous pathway he bounded, although not a young man, confidently and spiritedly, and, while Mistress Louise pressed her hands upon her eyes and shuddered, soon showed himself standing upon the edge of the rock of Dunluce.

"There is not the slightest danger, in reality," he said, again crossing to rejoin his friends, "upon any firm way just wide enough for the natural movements of the feet; if danger appear in such a situation, it comes from the fancy solely:—May I pray the fair company to observe another remarkable feature of my present castle of refuge?" he continued, now at their side pointing into the chasm beneath them: "the descent is not

difficult, even for ladies, and with the moon's help—she is rising abroad, over the sea, I reckon—will repay those who take pleasure in the wild scenery of Nature."

They were now at the side of the castle, opposite that which they had first seen from the road. The Baron, Patrick, Lady Dorcas, and her gloomy young friend, followed him down the stony and crumbling side of the chasm, and, with directions and example from him, gained its bottom. Here they stood nearly on a level with the sea, and perceived that either it or some volcanic convulsion, had perforated through and through the mass of rock upon which the castle stood, making a capacious cavern from the outward face of the huge natural bulwark, to its inland face, which at present confronted the spectators: and, glancing along the rudely-arched excavation, they could see the quiet waters of the ocean trembling and dimpling at a great distance, in the first rays of the moon, which, as premised by Johnson, was just rising above the horizon, and, as if fearfully, beginning to assume her reign of weak light, at the departure of the king of day.

"A' vera fine!" John Sharpe was heard to say, from the edge of the chasm over them, where he had sat down in no good-humour; "A' vera fine, nea doubt!"

His scoffing tones reminded his companions, indeed, that their admiration of the peculiar objects around them was ill-timed, and they made all speed to join him.

"Vera fine, thae beauties o' wild nature, doubtless," he continued, addressing himself to Johnson—"but if you have quite played your part of gallanty-showmon, freend, perhaps you will tell us why you beckoned us til come til you frae the road-side, and what you meant by saying we were imposed upon, and ta'en in, and the like."

"Willingly," answered the person he spoke to. "I saw you in conversation with four men, who, from their demeanour towards you and your friends, and their riding off without plundering you or them, I am sure gave you false accounts of themselves and their calling."

"Why—did you not know them?" asked Patrick.

"The spokesman I did know, Master O'Burke, having once or twice seen him at a distance."

"And wha and what d' ye guess they said they were?" questioned Sharpe.

"Fews' men, I warrant," answered his friend, smiling.

"And are they not?" resumed Patrick.

"Heaven forbid!" cried the catechised person—"Heaven

forbid that the brave and manly blood of the clan of the Fews ran in the veins of such fellows!"

"Wha then will the dearees be?" said John Sharpe.

"Tut, who but Tories—galloping Rapparees, giving themselves false names to guard against your suspicions of their real characters, that so you might not be able to hint information of having met or seen them, if by chance you should fall in with some who are upon their track from the South."

"I guessed e'en as much at the first look o' them," resumed Sharpe, glancing about for approbation into the faces of his companions.

"Ay, John, but did not hold to your opinion," observed Philip Walshe;—"no matter, now: let us endeavour to comprehend this puzzled matter to the utmost:—Strange," he went on, turning to Johnson, "that, being Rapparees, they departed without robbing us?"

"I noticed their leader counting your numbers, sir—excuse me if I omit giving you a proper title; but I have ventured to inquire it of poor John Gernon, and, even in so little a matter, his ill-timed spite would not let him oblige me."

"The title you give me is a right good one, friend, and for the present contents me." In saying this, Philp Walshe looked at the circle around him, to signify that he wished to remain unknown to Johnson. "But of these Tories; true they might have remarked our advantage in numbers, but must also have seen that we were unarmed."

"How could they tell what might be in your pockets or under your coats, sir? And I can surmise other reasons for their forbearance: they were but a detachment from Randal Oge's band coming to his succour out of the South, I warrant: they knew well, closely he has been pressed here of late, by my brothers, my cousins, and myself; they feared that a Johnson or two, or a score, might be within hearing of a pistol-shot; and so, upon the same grounds that caused them to assume other people's names, they spared, for the time, the purses of you and your party, sir.—*You*, gossip," turning to Shape, "you told them all you knew, I reckon?" He laughed good-humouredly.

"Every word, and dinna begrudge them the good it will do them, the deevils—the spawn o' the father o' lees!" answered Sharpe.

"And what said they upon it?"

"Pretended to rejoice at your luck, hinny—what else would they say or do? Ay, and wanted til make believe that they were

all in a haste to follow ye, and greet ye on the road I tould them ye took, Southward."

"Or thought I took, rather.—And what road was that?" he demanded carelessly.

John Sharpe faithfully informed him. also quoting the name of the places through or by which, in succession, the horsemen had settled to ride in search of their brother John.

"Ay, indeed!" and so saying, Johnson turned his face to the ruins on the rock, and blew a clear but low whistle on his bent fore-finger. It was quickly answered by about a dozen of his men, who came springing to him across the top of the arched wall.

"Four of the Raps have just passed us, boys," he resumed, addressing them, "in pursuit of me, as they think, along the banks of the Mourne, into Meath or Louth. Jump on your horses' backs, and ride, ride, ride, till you come up with them, or cross them. I want the Tories here before morning." The men left him without a word.

"And thae lads will be Johnsons over again?" demanded Sharpe.

"True ones to the back-bone, Mr. Steward."

"I pray you explain to me, Mr. Johnson," rejoined the Baron of Crana, "why, knowing the four riders to be your natural foes, and part of the gang you and your excellent and numerous family are abroad in these wild places to capture—why you suffered them to pass your stronghold, here, without molestation or question?"

"There was more than one reason for my indulgence to them at that especial time, sir. In the first place, although the making them prisoners must have been a certainty, it could not be done without broil, and perhaps bloodshed; and I crave of you but a simple regard for my word of truth, when I declare that I disliked enacting such a scene before the eyes of your ladies, mayhap to their peril, or injury, even."

"A gallant reason, if nothing else," observed Philip Walshe.

"Secondly, sir, I make no doubt, although the outlaws passed unharmed by me, and even should never be pursued by a party of my relations then at my side, (a good fortune not in store for them, however,) that it was very unlikely they could escape to-morrow or the next day other divisions of our Fews'-men, who are busily asking after them over the country. But my best reason is untold. At our parting from our strong house at the Fews, those of our clan to whom command

was given over the rest, settled between themselves certain business for each to do, upon different roads here in the North. I know not, as yet, how four of my brothers, and many of my cousins, have speeded in their commissions; but as for myself, my commission is accomplished, and was before daybreak this morning; and hence I am entitled, even by agreement with all the Johnsons, to rest quietly for the present campaign, or until we meet again and devise other plans, although Randal Oge O'Hagan himself should invite me to measure swords with him."

"A thing he's in no condition til do the day, whatever may be his mind," remarked John Sharpe, fixing upon the speaker a knowing and confidential look.

"And well you may say so," replied the other, returning him his regard in nearly similar expression.

"By reason that your ain little business, as you told us, is done and well done, hinny," pursued Sharpe, allowing his features to relax into their grin of satisfaction,

"Again you speak the blessed truth, gossip," smiled Johnson, nodding his head.

"And whare does he rest at prasent?" demanded John Sharpe; "ye'll ha' sent him til ae lodging-house built strong enow till your liking, pet?"

"Not yet; and I am free to tell you why. I wished to commit him upon the very last robbery he has effected in this neighbourhood. To do so, it was necessary to become assured that the witness against him could be forthcoming, and willing as well as ready to appear before a judge and jury. I therefore sent, early to-day, to the poor man's house, requesting his attendance at this my good castle of Dunluce; being absent elsewhere, he could not obey the summons till a few moments ere you appeared on the road; and then, as you may infer, our proceedings were interrupted."

"Sae, *he* is e'en still in your safe guardianship, yon?" continued Sharpe, pointing to the rock.

"Be assured he is."

"Maybe I won't--well, no—why should I—I or any body else," glancing at his fellow-travellers. "Suppose it, natheless —suppose he *is* taken care of to this good hour, as you say.--Wha is *he*, hinny—wha is *he?*—tell us, jest."

"You call him John Gernon," replied Johnson.

"And you, pet, your ain sel—what may you mak' bould til ca' him?"

"John Gernon, too—and another name into the bargain."

"Oge O'Hagan?" demanded Patrick.

"Hout, tout—havers and nonsense!" first answered John Sharpe, ironically; "how could you think o' sich ae thing?" Johnson's answer was more to the point.

"You may hear the facts from other lips than mine, Master O'Burke. As I have told you, your appearance on the road abroad spoiled our solemn inquiry, in the noble court of the castle yonder; but accused and acuser still wait my pleasure there, and say but the word, and they shall be brought before you and your good friends, and the matter speedily ended by despatch of the prisoner to Coleraine gaol."

Patrick yielded a ready assent to an arrangement which proposed much gratification to his curiosity; and while John Sharpe rubbed his hands triumphantly, or often tapped the ashes in his pipe, Johnson again whistled towards the ruin.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A MAN started to the rock's verge, in answer to his signal. Johnson gave the necessary directions across the chasm in a loud voice. The man disappeared behind a shattered gable, but quickly was in view again, followed by others. All walked over the top of the narrow wall; and, side by side with a very simple-looking rustic, and attended by three of Johnson's people, John Gernon appeared before the present controller of his fate.

Our party sat on stones within an imperfect enclosure formed by the few ruins on the main land. Johnson stood upright at one side. It was now early night, and the moonshine alone afforded a view, and a greatly changed one, of all objects and persons around. The huge mass of rock and castle blackened, except where rugged edges of split and torn walls, of rude window-holes, or sharp pinnacles, just caught lines or dottings of white radiance. In this effect, it was more fearful than in the daylight it would have been, to see the figures summoned by Johnson's whistle come, like shadows, across the now invisible footway from the rock, as if threading the deep gloom of the gulf below. And when Patrick's eye rested on Gernon, it seemed, whether from the strong glare of moonlight upon his features, or from the working of his fears, or from the un-

disguised display of his long-hidden nature, that the bold guardian of bachelors had sunk into a very commonplace scoundrel, to be pronounced guilty upon the mere evidence of his countenance.

"We begin our examinations over again, here," said Johnson to the prisoner, "and here they shall be brought to a close, for the satisfaction of some old friends of yours, whom you may recognize if you look close at them, though I warrant you scarce thought of counting their faces upon your jury."

At these words, Gernon, suddenly raising his eyes, started, and then sent a slow scowl over the circle he confronted.

"Ye are there, mother's pet-bird," said Sharpe.

"Stand forward, witness," continued Johnson, speaking to the simple-looking countryman—"stand forward, and tell us your story."

The witness said he had been to the fair of Coleraine, a short time ago; had there sold a horse and a pig; was returning home with the money in the evening, when the man before him —pointing to Gernon—well mounted and armed, met him on a lonesome part of the road, and holding a pistol to his head, robbed him of his little wealth.

"Did he tell you who he was before y e parted," demanded Johnson.

The man answered yes; and that when he heard the name, it frightened him more than the pistol at his head; put to flight all notions of resistance, and flung him on his knees to sue for mercy; and the so much appalling name was Randal Oge O'Hagan.

From the earnest simplicity of the poor witness's voice and manner, it was impossible in the least to doubt his story; and, after he had done speaking, a pause ensued, only disturbed by a chuckle from John Sharpe, beyond all others he had lately given.

"You hear the accusation against you, John Gernon, Mayor of Bull-ring and guardian of bachelors, otherwise Randal Oge O'Hagan, levier of black-rent, and Captain-General of Tories," said Johnson, slowly and gravely. Gernon glanced up at him, pushing out his under lip, and smiling; but he made no other answer.

"Then you admit it as well as hear it," resumed Johnson; still John Gernon was silent.

"And will say nothing?" questioned his examiner.

"Nothing;" at last replied the accused.

"So be it, then—" and Johnson drew forth a sealed paper from his bosom.

"Nothing; only this—" resumed Gernon—"I'll turn your present child's play into something serious yet—for all that's come and gone."

"Hither, friend," continued Johnson, beckoning the man who had borne dangerous evidence against the fallen Mayor of Bull-ring: "by his hands you have lost the sales-money of your pig and your horse, and by your hands he shall be led to jail."

The countryman shrunk back a little, at this announcement, obviously indifferent to the honour and triumph of guiding the prisoner, alone, into the safe-keeping of the law.

"I say it shall be so, and must be so, friend," pursued John son: "what fear you? his hands are well secured behind his back; he carries no weapons; here is one for you—" giving a pistol; "and here is my committal of the highwayman, addressed to the jailer of Coleraine prison;" and he handed the sealed letter.

"*Your* committal?" muttered Gernon.

"Mine—and it will suffice. True, I am not in the commission of the peace, and such documents are generally written by a magistrate; yet fear nothing, John, or Randal, commander-in-chief of loyal Militia, or of outlawed Rapparees; that paper, and my charge to this poor man, will bestow you according to your deserts. So good-night, and march on, before your keeper. If he once turns or hesitates upon the road," he continued to the somewhat tranquillized peasant, "shoot him as you would a mad-dog—Off, sirs!" And with another baleful smile, and a chuck of his head sideways, Gernon quietly walked before the countryman on his way to the jail of Coleraine.

"Business being despatched, gentles, let us speak of your intentions for the night," resumed John Johnson, gallantly addressing his visiters.

Patrick O'Burke and the Baron of Crana said, that from ignorance of the road, they knew not where to seek a supper and a night's rest, at that advanced hour, unless they returned to Coleraine, which they were disinclined to do.

"No; you want more friends about you than you can meet there," observed Johnson: and he proposed that the travellers should remain where they were until morning, partake of such homely refreshments as he could supply them with, and then try for some sleep, upon hay and rushes to be furnished from

his stores in the old castle, together with heavy cloaks in which to wrap the ladies.

Under all the circumstances, his arrangements were approved of: Lady Dorcas, when appealed to, laughingly accepted them; John Sharpe recommending them out of a mere wish to cultivate the friendship of the accomplished thief-taker: and Philip Walshe and Patrick thinking them not to be refused, when it was considered that the Rapparees were abroad, and that on no road in the district could their fair charges be so well protected during the night, as in their present place of refuge wild and exposed as it was, under the redoubtable guardianship of John Johnson and his men of the Fews.

With remarkable despatch, their host, by the hands of his followers, laid a basket of cold venison, cold fowls, bread, and good wine, before our benighted travellers, sharing the cheer himself, and playing the master of the feast gayly, and almost gracefully. From time to time he handed slices of the viands and the bread, and cups of the wine to his clan, the whole of whom (remaining after those who had galloped after the four strange horsemen) seemed to be now gathered together in the shaded end of the unroofed banquet-hall—Johnson and his company sitting at the other end in the moonshine, eating and drinking heartily, and chatting and laughing merrily. The provisions were quickly disposed of—and, indeed, he seemed anxious to have the meal over; at a few words from him, the hay and rushes, and the warm cloaks he had promised, were conveyed in a trice over the arched way, by his followers; and when he had himself adroitly assisted in making couches for our friends, under the most sheltered sides of the ruined walls, he took up the last wine-flask, filled a horn from it, and standing in the middle of the enclosed space, said—"*The duch-a dhurris!*—good sleep, and good-night!—Follow me, boys!"—and turned away, not however, as if to regain the castle, but as if towards the road which ran by it.

"You do not mean to ride quite away from us, surely?" asked Philip Walshe, in surprise, and much chagrin at the prospect of being deprived of the protection for the night upon which he and Patrick had so confidently reckoned.

"It must needs be, sir," he was answered—"If Gernon, alias Randal Oge, meets a Rapparee on the road, his hands will not long remain tied behind his back, nor I undisturbed at Dunluce: from the four points of heaven he would collect his scattered outlaws—also falling in, perchance, with the four stout fellows who were near us a while ago, and whom my

cousins may miss; then, bethink you, that owing to my present separation from my brothers and cousins in command, and the weakening of my own handful of relations, by despatching the scouts along the banks of the Mourne, I am in no condition to withstand the best that Randal can do; so, praying your consideration of my reasons, and your kind excuses for my necessity, once more good-night and pleasant repose."

"But will you not think of our dangerous situation, exposed here, without arms, to violence from any comers?" pleaded Philip Walshe.

"Rest with us some short time at the least, or wait for us to accompany you," urged Patrick.

"Stay, John, hinny," said Sharpe.

"Whisht!" whispered Johnson, suddenly starting and listening at the breach which gave easiest egress from the ruin —"By the moon above us, I have stayed too long already, maybe!"

"It will be unfriendly, or worse, to leave us now," continued the Baron.

"Hush, nonsense!" still whispered Johnson, speaking in, to them—"Mother of Heaven! what does the man mean, and horses on the road?—ay, and at more than one point, I fear. —Take this—and this—and this"—he snatched pistols, carbines, and short swords from his men, and cast them towards our friends—"Now ye are not unarmed, and are tall enough to do for yourselves the same that I must do—Good-night! good-night!" and he disappeared, closely followed by his people all treading softly and cautiously, though quickly.

Here, then, were his hitherto well-treated guests abandoned by him in no very comfortable situation. If Rapparees indeed approached, in hopes of finding him in the castle, the consequences, considering the presence of the ladies, seemed by anticipation terrible. Alone, and now armed as they were, Philip Walshe and Patrick, with their attendants at their back, including the willing, the courageous, and the fierce John Sharpe, would have feared little. To cross over into the main ruin on the rock, and take up a position behind the old walls, covering any assailing foes through window-holes and crevices, promised safety, if not triumph. But it was out of the question that, in the uncertain light and shade of the moon, Lady Dorcas and her friend could be urged, or even permitted, were they willing, to venture over the rugged archway, upon which a single false step was destruction. Nothing, therefore, could

be resolved, but to await coolly and watchfully whatever events might ensue.

All remained silent after Johnson's departure, listening for the sounds of horses on the road, of which he had spoken, but they could hear none. They therefore hoped that he had been mistaken. Then they lent their ears to catch signals of his own galloping from the ruins; still the gentle dashing of the sea below was the only noise which came to them through the silence of the night; and now they made another surmise, and an uncomfortable one. If the thief-catcher and his clan could ride off so softly, stark Rapparees, of whose skill in all such matters they were but imitators, could advance with equal stealth; and again our travellers remained in unpleasant suspense, only whispering now and then to each other.

Half an hour might have thus elapsed. Suddenly, the fair moonlight and the sleeping shadows around them were disturbed by faint flashes of red light, quickly succeeding each other, and then followed the sharp report of fire-arms, at a little distance, and at more than one point about the castle. Few conjectures seemed necessary upon this occurrence. The Rapparees had indeed surprised John Johnson in his retreat from Dunluce, and were now engaging him and his party, perhaps headed by the liberated Gernon. But many fervent though short prayers were put up for the success of the loyal Tory hunter, and for his speedy and triumphant return to his temporary fortress. It was remarkable, that old Rory Laherty, who hitherto, in Johnson's presence, at Pendergast Hall, or since their second meeting, seemed least in awe of that person, although his fixed eyes took a lively interest in whatever he said or did, now manifested excessive agitation at the prospect of his being discomfited, often uttering cries, and apostrophizing him in terms of pity and affection.

The shots grew more numerous and louder, and closed round the ruins of Dunluce. The galloping of horses also could be easily distinguished. Presently, mixed with the other sounds of hot engagement, groans arose from the road near at hand; then a gurgling wild shout a little farther off, and then a rush of footsteps towards our friends. The next moment, many of those who had gone off with Johnson hurried through the shadows of the mainland ruin, across the chasm, to the rock; and they had scarcely disappeared, when a man, in a full military uniform, more fashionable some fifteen years before than it then was, sprang after them, holding a carabine in his hand, and glancing fiercely over his shoulder. None of our friends

at first recognized him, but Rory Laherty soon pointed general attention more closely to the fugitive, shouting loudly as he cried—"His own very self afore me once over again!"—and then the features and air of their late entertainer and protector became distinct to all others of his party.

"Curse that yowl!—lie close there, and answer no questions!"—angrily whispered the object of his ecstasy, as he passed them like a vision, and racing over to the castle, was lost to view.

"That 'll be it, dearee—that 'll jest do" exhorted John Sharpe, in great interest—"Sax o' ye, ance ahint the portholes there, can beg of a score Raps to stay at this side wi' us."

His attention was diverted by the hasty coming of other heavy steps into the presence of him and his companions, and little time elapsed until the four riders, whom John had parleyed with on the road, through their spokesman, made their appearance, followed by a man of stature so much greater than any of them, that he looked formidably gigantic.

"What! such fools after all as to garrison the outworks and they not in good repair!" cried the former speaker of the party, presenting a pistol—"But no—hands down!" to his seconders.

"I make a mistake—here are none of those we want—friends, rather, that some of us have seen before, or seeming friends at least—though there may happen a new question and answer on that head, at finding them in such a place, and so armed, as I see they are at present."

"The arms are not ours," said Patrick; "we but picked them off the ground where they had been left by the men you are pursuing, and not knowing who was hurrying hither when we heard the shots and the shouting, and having ladies of gentle blood to protect, there is surely nothing wonderful or blameful in our having them now in our hands."

"Perhaps," answered the man, "as a proof of the fairness of your intentions, however, cast them down, all of you, where you say you have found them."

"Upon what challenge?" demanded Patrick.

"In whose name?" seconded Philip Walshe.

"Upon my challenge, and in the names of King William and Queen Mary," they were answered.

"Hear til him noo!" sneered John Sharpe; "and ye 'll be calling yourself over agin, if we were to ask ye, Pat Johnson, I 'se warrant—and that 's Ben—and that 's Isaac—and that 's

Daniel, ye ken—and ha' ye found your brother John?" he continued, still in a scoffing tone.

"Why, yes, we have," replied his former confidential friend; "although by chance, and not upon the road you recommended to us—(of which a word anon)—and here he is, at your service," turning round to the very tall and equally robust stranger who had followed into the ruin.

"Ay, here I am, and how do you like me?" demanded that person, and confronting Sharpe;—"You have been speaking well of me, as I hear, behind my back; does your good opinion hold face to face?" In the really laughing countenance of the young giant, in his voice, his manners, and his carriage, there was a lightness, almost a boyish playfulness, which caricatured his formidable stature and proportions.

"Get awa' wi' ye," said Sharpe, beginning to be much puzzled, and only yielding to vexation because he felt so; "I ken naething o' any o' ye, at ane side or t' other, and I 'se say nae mair than this—that I and my companions of the road have met bare-faced leears amang ye, the even, one wi' anither, and I dinna care to fash myself in finding out frae who in parteecular."

The men smiled and looked at each other, as the first speaker resumed—"No false words from us, of a certainty, friend; the story we told you on the road, we are ready to tell you over again now, and to abide by it."

"And you 'll be John Johnson, the Tory-catcher, in good earnest then, will ye, neighbour?" asked Sharpe, addressing the new-comer ironically.

"Why, yes, if so you please, and will take the word of my father and mother, and the book-entry of the parish, sir, although I have not yet arrived quite at the honour you invented for me—that is, not yet laid my hand on Randal Oge's shoulder."

"But ye met with him on the road?"

"Why, yes," and those he spoke to laughed loudly—"Why, yes, we think we did."

"And what ha' ye done wi' the dearee?"

"Come, come," as they laughed again, in much seeming enjoyment of a good joke—"It does truly appear that you, at the least, friend, if none others of your party, have been right well played upon by one who is best able to do it of all living Christians under the stars to-night."

"I was tauld as much afore, and not vera long syne," muttered Sharpe.

"Belike; but you may hear it proved now. Has any man present seen this paper in the hands of the writer of it?" he demanded, holding up what Philip Walshe knew, at a glance in the strong moonlight, to be the letter of committal, now open, which had been despatched along with Gernon to the gaoler of Coleraine; and accordingly the Baron declared his recognition of the document.

"That 's well; you shall quickly have wherewith to read it by"—the man produced a scrap of a torch from his ample pockets, lighted it at some touch paper, which he kindled by a snap of his pistol, and in the ruddy glare, which strangely contracted with the surrounding radiance of the moon, Philip Walshe read the following words aloud:—

"To the Gaoler of Coleraine County Prison.

"We hereby commit to your safe keeping, until his Majesty's going Judge of Assize and a jury of the county shall decide upon his demerits, John Gernon, his body, for having, on the King's highway, under assumption of our honourable name, taken from the person of Simon Peters, by force of arms, and by putting him in dread and peril of his life, the sum of fourteen pounds three shillings and one penny sterling.

"Witness our hand, this twenty-fourth day September, one thousand seven hundred and four.

RANDAL OGE O'HAGAN,
Protector of the Rights and Properties of Benefactors and Contributors, Chief Ranger of the Mountains, Surveyor-General of the High Roads of Ireland, and Lord Examiner of all Passengers."

An unusually alarming cry broke from old Rory Laherty at hearing this letter read. John Sharpe, still out of humour with every thing and every one, because with his own discernment and previous attempts at superior sagacity, said he would not believe a word of it. The Baron, Patrick, and the ladies, were less obstinate and incredulous, as several minute discrepancies in the character and explanations of the counterfeit John Johnson, although glossed over by his own plausibility, now occurred to their minds.

"All doubt can be removed on the matter," continued Pat Johnson, "and it may be necessary so to do, if only for the upholding of our authority; let us see those we crossed on the road first to-night, on their way from this place," he continued, speaking through the breach of the ruined wall near him; and

several others of his relations walked in with the countryman who had been sent to escort Gernon to jail, and with Gernon himself, still firmly bound. The former proved the indentity of Randal Oge's letter of committal. The latter now no longer denied the fact of his having taken the price of Simon Peter's pig and horse, "only for a bit of sport," he said, under the name of the notorious outlaw.

Philip of Crana, greatly interested and excited, demanded what all the Johnsons next proposed to do. Pat answered, that they intended to let Randal Oge and his gang starve upon the insulated rock, watching them day and night for the purpose of ending their long warfare in that way, provided he would not quietly surrender.

"To attempt to cross over and fight him, and catch him, and tie him, were madness," continued Pat; "he and his boys would pick us down like curlews, one by one, as we walked over that perch, there."

"He may make a sally upon you," said Patrick.

"No fear of that; for just the same reason that we will not assault him in his holds, for in his passage hither we would have *him* under our carabines. I think, notwithstanding, that if one or two persons could win a fair and peaceable parley with Randal, he would not stay there to die the death of a disowned old horse, in a ditch; for, many and great as are his doings, there is a powerful family disposed to sue for merciful treatment of him."

"I pray you on what account?" demanded Philip Walshe.

Pat Johnson glanced at him recollectively, and with a tone and manner which betokened a disposition to be less communicative, upon a second thought, answered, that till he was more sure of the fair intentions of those he spoke with, he did not care to resolve any farther questions. John Sharpe's animadversions broke forth, but not heeding them, he added, that he had found the present company under very suspicious circumstances, lodged in Randal Oge's temporary house, and with Randal Oge's arms in their hands.

His spirit fully roused, his temper somewhat, and foreseeing that unless he could by some means fully satisfy the thief-catchers of the groundlessness of their suspicions, he and his sister and friends might be exposed to more disagreeable adventures of the road, Philip took a sudden fancy, and drawing Pat Johnson aside, said to him—You have not sufficient trust in the outlaw or his men to go across to the castle—you, or any of your clan—upon the parley you spoke of?"

Pat answered, "certainly not."

"Tell me the particulars, and I will go alone then," resumed the young Baron, "and perhaps that may satisfy you that neither I nor my friends are a Rapparee's cronies."

The man accordingly whispered to him the name of the family who were interested for Randal, and the reason of their interest, and Philip Walshe moved quickly to the arched wall. The instant his intentions were guessed by his fellow-travellers, they one and all cried out to him to forbear and stay where he was. His sister evinced most affectionate alarm; Mistress Louise impassioned earnestness; but the person who, for some unknown though strong reason, showed surpassing agitation was Rory Laherty. He screamed out, in his bad English, supplications, prayers to the Baron of Crana, the tendency of his words intimating that he thought the volunteer was about to attempt the capture of the Rapparee; he even added forewarnings and threats of something more terrible than bloodshed, likely to be the result of such a meeting between them; he fell on his knees, weeping, in wild entreaty: and finally, when the adventurer appeared gliding over the black chasm, his own figure touched with moonlight, Rory Laherty ran after him, and they disappeared among the ruins on the rock almost together.

Soon afterward, loud but indistinct exclamations, seemingly of consternation and affliction, were heard from the castle, by the listeners on the main land, and the tones were not those of Rory Laherty, although his wailings came shrilly too. Nearly an hour elapsed and Philip Walshe did not return. Vague but chilling fear, and a kind of horror, possessed the hearts of his anxious friends. At last two figures issued through a broken door-way, and slowly clambered down upon the insecure footway over the chasm. Midway, they were recognized to be the same persons who had gone over. The Baron of Crana approached his friends dejectedly and sorrowfully: his head hung on his breast, and he sobbed. Without noticing the expectant Johnsons, he advanced to his sister, saying—"Dorcas, your ear—" and before he could utter a whisper, he embraced her, weeping.

CHAPTER XIX.

LIKE a sister, tenderly and beautifully, Lady Dorcas, her own tears streaming fast, in her turn embraced and caressed the Baron of Crana, urging him to disclose the reason for his sudden agitation.

"Oh, Dorcas, dearest Dorcas," he answered in a low and cautious voice—"my only sister—my mother's only daughter—my only—yes—my only near of kin in the wide world—shame and beggary—Who stands so near?" interrupting himself, as Mistress Louise bent her head to listen—"oh, you, Mademoiselle—but I pray your pardon—this is private discourse between brother and sister."

"Baron!" said the young lady, drawing back in haughty surprise, as if some previous state of acquaintanceship between him and her had seemed to have entitled her to share his confidence, and as if she now resented his unexpected slight.

"Tut, tut," he retorted peevishly, "there is a time for fooling, and there is not."

"Fooling!" Patrick heard her repeat, in a suppressed but bitter and indignant tone—"and call you the past by a name like that?" she continued to herself—"*dare* you?"

Another person was nearer to Philip Walshe and his sister than Louise Danville had been during the few words of imperfected explanation which he had addressed to Lady Dorcas; it was John Gernon. From the moment that the strange cries had been heard across the chasm, that individual showed deep attention and watchfulness. When the Baron and Rory appeared returning to their friends, he stealthily shuffled, step by step, towards the place whither, as he seemed to conclude, the young nobleman would first repair; his present protectors, being on guard at the only points by which he could escape them, did not heed his movements in the general interest of the scene; and thus he contrived to stand behind a fragment of the ruin, directly at Lady Dorcas's back, while her brother and she embraced, and while they conversed, for they did converse. He also overheard the conversation between Philip Walshe and Mistress Louise, together with her subsequent mutterings to

herself; and, it may here be added, he took especial notice of every sentence which caught his ear.

"Speak now, dear Philip," whispered Lady Dorcas, after Louise Danville had drawn back, and stood moodily apart—"no one can overhear you;—yet no—be silent!" Casting an observant glance behind, her eyes encountered those of John Gernon, full of a deep and bad expression of interest and eager attention. Her brother, directed by her words and looks, now saw him too, and in much anger appealed to the Johnsons to remove him.

The men accordingly advanced, and led Gernon to the other end of the ruinous enclosure, exhorting him not to meddle farther in affairs which did not concern him, and reminding him that although Randal Oge's letter of committal was only a good joke, the testimony of Simon Peter was something more, and to be yet disposed of.

"But what in truth troubles you, sir?" they continued, addressing the Baron—"We hope you have met no ill-treatment among the Raps, yon—?"

"Not from Randal Oge," he answered, "nor, I am assured, with his consent; but, to tell you the good truth, I narrowly escaped with life back to my friends here; one of his fellows, after parting him, most treacherously attempted to stab me, and I know not how it was," he continued, hesitating—"but I believe the thought of the unprotected state in which a death so closely avoided would leave an only sister,—that, belike, put me off my guard when I re-approached this lady, and brought some foolish tears into my eyes:" while speaking, he had taken her hand, and now he kissed it.

"You have said a false say, whatever may be your true cause of trouble," again muttered Mistress Louise, who had walked far away from him and Lady Dorcas.

"He has; and you are concerned in his cheating story," whispered John Gernon, near to whom she stood, without perceiving him. Louise Danville looked up at him with one of her remarkable glances, as if she would satisfy her awakened curiosity, by reading his very soul.

"We may speak of this again, Mistress," he added. She looked away from him, slightly nodded, and turned off.

"It does a body's heart good to see such brother's and sister's love," meantime said Pat Johnson, replying to the Baron's last speech; "and not a Johnson of us but is glad you are again safe at the lady's side, sir,—But how sped your parley with Master Randal Oge?"

"He consents to surrender two hours after daybreak," answered Philip Walshe, "and to submit himself to your disposal, that so you may make sure of the heavy fine awarded by the Government for the taking him, yet, he surrenders on your pledge of his being allowed free communication with the loyal and powerful family, of whose generous dispositions towards him you have yourself spoken, and of whose promise to remember a good service done to one of them—their head and chief, indeed—in France, he certainly entertains his own hopes."

"And well he may, sir," rejoined Pat Johnson: "the Cooteses, of Cootes-hill, are truly a family that can save his neck, if any in the realm of Ireland can."

Philip Walshe groaned, catching at Patrick O'Burke's arm, who now was at his side, and Patrick alone heard the suppressed sound.

"And, as you say, sir, upon Randal's report, doubtless, it was indeed the head of that family whom he stole from the French Jack-Ketch a year or two ago, when Sir Eyre Coote lay in a French jail, sentenced to die for happening to kill a French grandee in a duel; body and bones, in spite of French bars, and locks, and bolts, off bold Randal flew with him, the Monsieurs not able to guess how; and sure, sir, one good turn deserves another; and I do think that it will cost Sir Eyre his whole estate, and the King and Queen his good services, or he will save Randal Oge from the dance upon nothing which you know, sir, that he has been practising the steps for this many a good year, over almost all the roads in Ireland."

"Does he truly merit so well an ignominious end?" asked the young nobleman in a hollow voice, of which not a cadence resembled his usual gay and spirited tones: "I have heard from every tongue that his unhappy hands are clear of blood, and that the poor man's wife or children, nay, the poor man himself have never had cause to curse him."

"That is all true—more true than any one of the ballads sung to the tune of his own name," answered Johnson: "the rich of the land, and never the poor, have been his prey, to a certainty; the grand nobility, the well-kept bishops—God bless their Right Reverendships! and I speak of them in all respect)—and now and then a richer man and woman than any of them—King William and Queen Mary, their blessed selves, no less; I mean of an odd time, when Randal has watched an honest tax-gatherer on his road, with a good round sum in his saddle-bags to Dublin, and managed to borrow it of him.—

But here lies the point, sir, notwithstanding. It's always more dangerous to make enemies of the rich than of the poor; and Randal may bless the day he took the sting out of one of them, for that same reason."

"I agree," said Philip Walshe; "and now we take our leave of you, as the day will soon break, I reckon:—Patrick, a word without."

"You are free to go, sir, and thanks for your aid in this matter; for our own particular parts, sir, you will understand that we wish well to poor Randal; neither spite nor malice is in our hearts against him; only, let him put us in the way of demanding the handsome reward he is worth, and then luck and speed to the Cooteses and him, provided he turns good boy for the future, and mends his ways, and dies an honest man."

"Thanks to *you*, Johnson—" Philip Walshe shook the man's hand, to his great astonishment; then checking himself—"farewell, I mean—come, O'Burke—where are our horses?"

He was turning, leaning on Patrick's arm, to the outer space where the horses had been secured. His sister called him to her side, and when he had obeyed her summons, eagerly besought him to acquaint her with the real cause of his recent affliction.

He told her that she had already heard it in the explanation given to Johnson. She looked incredulous. He vehemently assured her she had.

"But your first words, Philip," she resumed.

"I know not what they were:—forget them you, dear Dorcas, however they might have sounded to your ear;—I repeat, I know not how it was—I think I am no coward—some at my side in the field have said so—but that was indeed a very weak moment—let it now pass forever between us—do not speak to me of it again—it irks me, by making me ashamed of myself—so, adieu an instant—I want O'Burke's eye with mine to oversee our horses for the road"—and he left her, and again taking his young friend's arm, walked quickly with him out of the ruins.

"Patrick," he said, looking round to note if they were alone—"Patrick, good lad, I suppose your quick mind apprehends it? I thought at first to disclose it to Dorcas; but I was impetuous, and off my guard then—and 'tis better, much better to keep her ignorant for the present at the least—certainly for the present—but you must be my counsellor—and only you, excepting poor Rory Laherty, who, it appears, has had the secret buried in his faithful old heart ever since long before

your good father's death—you and old Rory, I say; and Patrick, as I premised, it has started across your thoughts, has it not?"

"Some loose and unshaped misgivings I have experienced, of a certainty, dear friend—but—that it could be true——"

"It *is* true, dear O'Burke"—he caught Patrick's hand and wrung it:—"it is, and it has cut Philip Walshe's heart through and through at the roots—make allowance for my weakness, good fellow—but oh, Patrick, that unhappy man—brother—now first seen and known—the poor, lost, lost Roger."

"Baron of Crana,"—Patrick began, wishing to expostulate, and condole, and advise: his friend quickly interrupted him.

"Baron of Crana—who?—You address *me*, and I have now no such title, man. No, no! but look yonder. There, upon that rock—among those ruins—like himself and his name—begirt with the savage sea at one side, and with common thief-catchers at the other—there, a common thief—and the surrendered prisoner of those blood-money men—there, good boy, skulks the real and the last Baron of Crana!"

"Nay, nay," said Patrick, "do not let too gloomy a view of things overpower you, in your present great and natural grief. Why should he be the last Baron of Crana?—why should not the secret of the outlawed Roger being yet alive, remain as profound, although you and I have come to the knowledge of it, as it has done for some sixteen years? And, if so, must not you still be Baron of Crana, with an unattainted estate—ay, and your children, and their children after you?"

"It is not that—it is not that!" answered Philip Walshe; "it is not that, except in its application to poor Dorcas, which now most afflicts me—chokes me—God knows, it is not! But O'Burke, think of *him*, think of *him!*"

"I do, and pity him from my soul; and you as his brother. How did your meeting affect him?"

"Poor fellow! poor fellow! naturally and strongly, lovingly and terribly. O'Burke, it *was* a terrible moment. I stood before him suddenly, almost unknowing that the old man followed me. He, deeming me come upon a bad design against him, made at my throat; we struggled, for I resisted with all my strength; then came Laherty's shriek, and his low words —'Sons of the same father! Philip Walshe and Roger Walshe, do not spill each other's blood!"

"Terrible indeed," said Patrick, as the narrator paused, yielding to his emotions.

"When he heard the words, and had looked long enough

into the old servant's face to know him, he let me go, and fell backward till a wall propped him; and his cries, O'Burke, then filled my ears and soul—ye must have caught them here. I pass over my own conduct on the occasion; you will imagine it. The first moment of observation I could command, I looked towards him. There he still stood, supporting himself against the wall, one hand upon his eyes, as if he would press them inward, to turn the course of their tears. Soon after, he uncovered them, and fixed them on mine; and then his look, and the expression of his whole face, was pitiable, miserable—heart-breaking, O'Burke. Love of me, and fear of not being held worthy of my love—a wish to embrace me and kiss me, and a doubt of being spurned—ay, O'Burke, 'tis horrid to say, but I read the feeling with one glance of my heart—all this worked his poor features."

"Well?" asked Patrick, in a low, soft, and broken voice.

"Well?—I—I ran to him, and embraced my brother," replied Philip Walshe; the sobs and tears of the scene he described, returning at this vivid and recent recollection of it.

"And then, after some indulgence of your passion on both sides, ye spoke together," resumed Patrick, anxious, for his friend's sake, to ascertain how far this discovery might seem likely to affect his fortunes and those of his sister.

"Yes, yes; but to little purpose. Nor if I had rested on that rock till morning, could either of us have interchanged a calm word. But I am to see him again—that is—oh, pity me in your heart, O'Burke!—that is, if ——"

"I know," said Patrick, as his friend struggled to express his meaning; then wishing to lead Philip Walshe's mind to a less afflicting point of the subject, he went on—"And how came my father's servant to know of all this?"

"Roger, as I have learned from Laherty and himself, escaped in secret to your father's house, after the Hillsborough affair, to recover of his bad wounds. While lying concealed there, he was outlawed in Meath. The tidings of the outlawry no sooner reached him than he fled to France, still secretly and disguised, resolved to abandon Ireland for ever. Some ill chance, I know not what as yet, drove him back to his own accursed country; but during his hiding with the O'Burke, one servant of the house, and one only, was in his confidence—that one, Rory Laherty; and hence the old man's recognition of him among us upon this unlucky journey, as well as at Pendergast-Hall, although, as he saw that perhaps years, suffering, and a changed mode of dress, together with

taking little notice of so humble a man, kept Roger from recollecting him, old Rory, for my sake, and my sister's, and, he foolishly thought, for your's too, as our friend, would not give a hint as to who the Rapparee was, until, to save one brother from killing the other, he at last spoke out what he knew."

"And not so incautiously, I hope, as to make any of the wild people in the castle, at the same time, the wiser?"

"I believe, no; for, although his cries were loud, his words were lower, or drowned in them—but what does it matter?"

"Much; and you will agree with me to-morrow. Poor Roger himself—" Patrick paused.

"Well? well, O'Burke?" Philip Walshe looked up, as if he suspected the tendency of the delayed question.

"'Tis an irksome point, Baron, and I ask your excuses for touching upon it; but if I am to be your counsellor, it is also necessary that I should do so. Are you so assured of your poor brother's principles, hitherto unknown to you, and not practised in the best school, you know, of late, as to make certain that ——"

"That he will now keep the secret on which depends the saving of me and Dorcas from beggary? My life upon his honour and honesty, after all his trials and *nominal* offences against the laws!" answered Philip Walshe, with more of the brother in his feelings and words than of a dispassionate and disinterested man. "My life upon his honour and honesty, even though he could gain by a breach of either. But how could he gain by such a dishonour as you imagine, O'Burke? Think, and you will find you have not yet compassed the whole subject. He could only ruin Dorcas and me, by publicly proclaiming his present existence. He could not enjoy his father's lands himself—not a sod of them. Let him be shown alive, and they pass from him, as well as from me, for ever. Besides, and worst of all for him, let him live for a hundred years to come, and be discovered living at the end of that time, and he would die the death of a traitor and outlaw under the ban fixed upon him in Meath, even supposing him to escape all immediate perils of a death still more degrading to his memory and his family. No, no, I think not, I repeat, of losses in fortune to come from this event. His fate, Patrick, his uncertain—I should rather say all but certain fate—the yearnings towards a brother never before seen, though dearly loved upon report—of a brother deemed dead and changed into worms these sixteen years, now found a breathing man—and then *so*

found, O'Burke!—But hush! some one has been listening to us, behind yon large stone."

"I saw no one," answered Patrick, hastening to the place pointed out by Philip Walshe; "and no one is now here."

"I did not expect you should find any one *now*," replied his friend; "but I thought at that moment that a figure passed from behind the stone into the ruins, very indistinct in the shadow, and only caught by my side glance."

"It cannot have been so; let us rather say that your alarmed state of mind has deceived you."

"Be it so: but I will stay no longer in this place. Assuredly, O'Burke, not to witness the surrender of my poor brother into the hands of his vulgar and calculating hunters-down. Come, let us to the road, with what heart we may. In Crana Castle, if not before, you will counsel me as you can; and there, too, I must await farther tidings of poor Roger. He has promised that a man shall speed to me, every day, with information of his hopes and situation; the first rider to take the road after his communication with those great, and powerful, and loyal Cooteses. Come, my servants hold our horses, I see. Let us hide our true faces, and try to make poor Dorcas smile again."

CHAPTER XX.

It was again the sunset. From the top of an eminence, over which clambered a main road, a spacious semicircular view of undulating hills and valleys, broke upon the eye. Through the lowest valley winded a clear inland river; beyond the highest hill shot up very distant blue mountains of a peaked and craggy outline; all the land within sight was either cultivated, or covered with venerable woods; and before one of those woods, which ascended a rising ground at its back, stood, in about the middle of the beautiful, though map-like scene, a castle of the Irish feudal times, many centuries old, but, at the date of this tale, still in complete preservation.

Its defensive works of circumvallation were numerous and formidable. Its outward ballium comprehending near an acre of ground, had a round tower at each angle, as also one at

either side of an embattled gateway, with a portcullis, which fronted the road over the hill that gave a first view of the building. Within this area, or outward court, was the body of the castle, enclosing an inner court, of an oblong form. From its centre, opposite to the entrance in the ballium, projected a massive quadrangular keep, of five stories; wings extending from its sides, to the right and to the left, terminated in round towers, with small round chimneys: at right-angles with these continued the main body of the edifice, running back, until united by a high embattled wall, ending in square towers, with tall, narrow, square chimneys, and many of them. In point of taste and uniformity, the entrance to the inner court might have been expected in the keep, opposite to that in the ballium, which led into the outer one; it was found, however, in another front, flanked by yet another round tower, and having a second portcullis. But altogether, the castle was one of the highest class of those built by the Lords of the Pale, perhaps about the fourteenth century, and had a character of strength and rude dignity, which called up the image of a martial and powerful chief of feudal days.

"Ah, old Crana!" said Philip Walshe, as, with all the friends last found in his company, he gained a first glance, from the summit of the steep road, of the whole scene described.

"Dear, dear Crana," sighed Lady Dorcas, smiles and tears in her eyes together.

"And you remember it, Dorcas?" asked her brother.

"Ay, better than many a scene of yesterday, although I was but a wild little child, as high as my own present knee, when ye sent me away from it."

"What are those low mounds of earth to the south, then? I will try your boasted memory."

"The bow-butts, to be sure, where the quarrelsome followers of our quarrelsome forefathers used to practise their archery. And nearer to the castle is the bowling-green; and close by the fish-pond, fed by the little stream from Lisnaliagh, or the townland of the leech, in former days, is your cruel cock-pit, Philip."

"The townland of the leech?" repeated O'Burke, "and had the physicians attending upon great families of old, their own allowance of land, named after them, upon the Baron's estate?"

"Such has been the case, at least at Crana, and upon other old estates which have come under my eye," answered Philip: "in fact, the seat of an ancient Baron, here in Southern Ire-

land, tried to imitate a royal court in all things, though upon an humble scale: and many other proofs of the fact are found in the names of other patches of land, now visible to us."

"The puir, puffed-up creatures," said John Sharpe.

"Yonder," continued Philip Walshe, "are fields called after the ancient master of the hawks, of the cantred,—Ballysealgrave; in the other direction, surrounding the clump of old oaks, you see Ballliaguidhe, or the townland of the huntsman; and the more useful than ornamental swineherd had his portion—Knocknamuck—nearer to the castle."

"Do not forget the merry tailor's little settlement,—Foiltailleur—running towards us, along the banks of that dear little shining stream, from Gortnaceap, or the field of stumps," added Lady Dorcas.

During this conversation, Philip Walshe endeavoured to assume in his sister's presence his usual lightsome tones and manner. He had done so since their departure from Dunluce, many days before, and, it seemed, with sufficient effect to lull her suspicions of a more particular cause for his agitation, after meeting his outlaw brother, than that which he had chosen to yield her. Her own sparkling spirits had not fully returned, however; though when he questioned and rallied her upon her very unusual tendency to look grave and say little, she assured him she was not aware of what he attributed to her; or if now and then a shade did steal over her mind, it came she knew not how or wherefore. Patrick O'Burke was the most downcast of the party: and for several reasons. Philip Walshe's present situation took full hold of his mind, as much, perhaps more, on his sister's account than on his own, for Patrick began to struggle with unbidden sighs whenever he looked upon that very fascinating lady, and to redden and seem off his guard when she spoke to him. Then, he could not avoid feeling deeply and keenly that he was about to seek a second refuge under a second roof, which was not his own; and in fact, all his future prospects presented a confused, a gloomy, and an irritating subject of contemplation, particularly when viewed under the influence of the new sensations beginning to possess his bosom. As to Rory Laherty and John Sharpe—the former was all ecstasy at his return to the South—(although far from his old home, it was the South still) and he spoke Irish as fluently as gushes a long pent-up river, to almost every person he met on the road; and the latter grew proportionately sour and critical, after having passed the borders of Ulster; found fault where it was not to be found, as well as where it was;

called the pure old Celtic tongue, or the purest remains of it then extant, a manner of speech not becoming pigs; and was snappish with his old friend Rory, if appealed to upon the excellence of any thing or object around him.

To the manner of tillage of the Southern province, to the dress of the people, to their breed of cattle, even of dogs, he had something to say. Nay, while all his fellow-travellers admired the rich as well as extensive amphitheatre of cultivated hill and valley, or of majestic woods around the castle of Crana, he depreciated the soil, the crops, the trees; in fact, cried out that "all was barren." And of the castle itself, his notice was peculiar. He could not understand, he said, the use or purpose of so much old stone and mortar, in a residence for a few quiet Christian people, or, at least, a few who ought to be quiet and Christian, though he left all that to themselves; and then the senseless "wheerlegigs," or windmills, at the corners, and by the gate, and the big fool of a square thing in the front, and all the pretences for windows, and the make-believes for chimneys; for he would warrant that the one-half of them had never been warmed by a puff of smoke, of as much consideration as warmed his nose at that moment—indeed the whole old barrack of a place—(castle, forsooth!)—looked very little like an abode that had often smelt of venison, or good ox, "ae half hour afore the hour o' dinner—troth, jest;" and, in conclusion, he pitied the extravagant, pretending, and poor pride of Southern Papists, and asked—(he was thinking of Pendergast-hall)—why could they not build solid, well-shaped, square, sensible houses, of comfortable-looking brick, three stories high?

It has been said that O'Burke was the most downcast of the party; but he was not the most reserved. Since her few words of misunderstanding with Philip Walshe at Dunluce, Louise Danville scarce opened her lips to any of her companions, and she took little pains to hide the positive, and, seemingly unmeasured displeasure which settled upon her countenance: indeed, one of the remarkable characteristics of this young person was, the almost total want of the worldly experience which teaches to veil or suppress vehement feelings of any kind. Lady Dorcas had made many attempts to conciliate her, without alluding to the past, but ineffectually; her friend remained distant, silent, and all but uncivil. Philip Walshe himself appeared willing to make up the quarrel upon which was founded her unlovely mood. He rode at her side, leaving his sister in charge of Patrick, and even attempted some little sallies, and a renewal of the personal flattery which had marked his pre-

vious conversation with her; the one much opposed to his present real state of feeling, the other as unmeaning as they had ever been. But she reined up her jennet when he too closely approached her, and paused for him to move forward; his witticisms did not extract a smile, and his silly compliments only caused her to shake her head, or to frown, or to assume a scoffing and bitter expression of mouth. Once or twice, indeed, tears which she did not permit him to see, filled her downcast eyes, or she flashed at him a still secret glance of mixed reproach, tenderness, and impatient indignation. Patrick occasionally caught some of this by-play, and wondered at the primitive strength of her character, as well as at the nature of the connexion existing between her and his friends. He was soon to see both more fully explained.

A month had passed over in Crana castle, and he had explored all the interesting walks and scenery lying immediately about it; silent valleys, watered each by its own little streamlet; the fragrant path along the side of the glassy river; trackless woods, shaded and tangled, like his own mind, and mournfully and yet sublimely echoing to the raven's croak, or the wild pigeon's coo; and more open realms of leafy solitude, where the partially whitened trunks of gigantic and aged beeches stood often wide asunder, allowing glady views, up hill or down dell, still of trees and trees, with fresh spots of green grass between, to so great a distance that sometimes the eye wavered over a vague, airy blue tint, in which stems and branches, and the medium-dimmed light of the dancing sunbeams, became one confused vision of shapes and colour. Here and there deer grazed, near him and far off, or rushed in a herd, upon some wayward impulse, down into the bottom of a thickly planted valley, or engaged each other in combat, making the lonely shades around ring to the martial clattering of their antlers.

But Patrick was not often, indeed seldom, alone during these rambles. His young host, or his sister, accompanied him, together or separately; and the latter was oftenest his companion. By her side, as she smiled, or laughed, or blushed at her own sparkling or fervid thoughts, he hourly nourished an absorbing passion. Even yet the unrestrained merriness of her manner, at their first meeting, had not come back to Lady Dorcas; but he scarce regretted its partial disappearance: indeed, he thought her of more worth and depth without it. Perhaps he occasionally ventured to draw, from this change in her, conclusions most delightful. It was certain that Dorcas Walshe

observed the great and pure devotion of his heart for her, and did not put forth, in words, looks, or actions, any intimations, direct or indirect, of her disapproval.

Meantime, Louise Danville never offered to join him or the mistress of Crana castle in their walks abroad. Books of a religious, and, at the same time, of a conventual description, or her needle, seemed to engross all her attention at home. In her present sulkiness, she appeared to make a kind of display of her industry and her little pious observances, and, at the same time, not to be in the least aware that much of all this was childish or mawkish, or more suited to command admiration in the inferior nunnery where she had spent the greater part of her life, than in the world of which she was now a member.

Indeed, chiefly owing, perhaps, to her neglected education, the precocious maturity of Louise Danville's heart was not more striking than the backwardness of her mind; or, it might be better to say, that while Nature had ripened the one, as in every situation Nature will do, the other had not been gaining observation and judgment sufficient to go hand-in-hand with Nature, to guide her growth, and lop her self-exhausting luxuriance. Louise was a woman in feeling, a child in common sense. She loved with intensity, with perfected strength; but she had never yet asked herself if her passion was misplaced, or even requited. Having weakly mistaken a few commonplace speeches from a man of the world, as an acknowledged response to her love, she was ready to resent, as insult and outrage, any change in his manner towards her. Already she has been seen thus acting, to a certain extent. Most unfortunately for herself and all around her, she was capable of allowing her infatuation to overstep any limit.

The face and person, appearance and bearing of this child-woman, indicated her character. It has been said that she was of low stature, and very slight: it is added, that all who looked at her believed she had yet to grow taller and rounder, though such was scarcely the fact. And then, strongly marked as were her features, they gave no combined expression of maturity, with all their ordinary gloom and reserve; and when impetuous passion blazed from her large black eyes, knitted her brow, and made her dark cheek pale, people wondered to see a child's face so strangely agitated. Her age was between fifteen and sixteen, but she did not seem within two years of it.

While she sat at home, as has been said, and while her friends otherwise engaged themselves, Philip Walshe did not

renew with Patrick any conversation about his brother Roger. Except upon the few occasions when he forced himself to look cheerful, and speak lightsomely in his sister's presence, Patrick being by, he wandered much alone about his castle, or shut himself up in the old apartment, called the library. But his young visiter did not fail to observe, that towards night he always walked in view of the road to Crana, upon which, as it climbed over the hill, a traveller could be discerned at a good distance; and though out of respect to his present reserve, Patrick seemed to take no notice, he further suspected that more than once Philip Walshe had joined a horseman, who had come off that road, and conversed secretly with him. Nor did he find it difficult to surmise who were those mysterious visiters, for he remembered Roger's promise to despatch an express to Crana every day, after the lapse of a certain time.

Another of these couriers arrived. Patrick was walking with both his friends on the banks of the river when the rider appeared on the highest point of the hill-road. They all saw him, and observed upon him together. Lady Dorcas wondered who he was; Patrick, not willing to show any consciousness, supposed him to be some traveller, who had mistaken the road to Crana for the main road. Philip Walshe, in a forced laugh, said he was perhaps a Rapparee reconnoitring the castle for a night attack.

"He is not the first scout then," observed Dorcas; "I think I have noticed other strange horsemen come down that way lately of an evening."

"By yea and nay, and may be so, sister; and that's a good reason for looking after the present one," answered Philip, still endeavouring to wear a light manner; and he left her and Patrick alone, and bent his steps towards a secluded place in his domain, whence the hill-road could still be viewed by him, although he no longer remained visible to them.

Their eyes continued fixed on the rider. He was now descending the road slowly and watchfully. After a few moments he reined up, and seemed replying to a signal from some one below him, and then he spurred his horse, and, as he approached the level of Crana castle, was hid from view.

Dorcas sighed profoundly after his disappearance. Patrick, glancing at her, saw that tears started from her eyes. The understanding between them warranted an inquiry on his part as to the cause of her affliction; but he feared that it related

to a subject upon which he must not speak with her, and, therefore, not seeming to notice her tears, he remained silent.

This policy did not, however, avail him much. Lady Dorcas, suddenly raising her head, and regarding him steadfastly, said—"Mr. O'Burke, do not *you* really know the mystery from which, and all knowledge of which, Philip Walshe so carefully excludes his only sister?"

Patrick could only temporize, by demanding, in turn, what she meant.

"Nay, answer me, sir, more honestly—excuse the word—but I *am* afflicted. Has not Philip told *you*, at least—(note you—I wish no breach of confidence with him, if you are bound to hold the secret from *me*)—but has not Philip told you upon what errand these dangerous-seeming men come here to visit him?"

Patrick could safely answer no; and he hastened to add that her brother and he had never exchanged a word on the subject, since their arrival at the castle of Crana.

"That is very strange," she continued, "but it only heightens my dread of his peril in whatever hidden matter so much engages him; for perilous, truly, must the business be, which he will not impart to a single creature that he loves, or that loves him in return."

Patrick hoped his friend might stand free of all dangerous secrecy, and he protested that he saw no grounds for Lady Dorcas's sisterly alarm.

She shook her head. "Ah, Mr. O'Burke, I am not so quick to take up fanciful causes for alarm, nor so easily blinded when my reason embraces true ones. Philip has not been able to deceive me into the belief that his heart is at rest, ever since that moonlight adventure in the old castle northward. Nor am I sure that the account he gave us of his own mysterious adventures, while parleying with the outlaw across the dark chasm, is the real and true account. He vehemently insisted, however, that I should receive it as such; and my love for him, and indeed my duty to an only brother, who has stood me in the place of a father, and a kind one, oblige me to question him no closer. But, Mr. O'Burke, my mind has ever since been filled with fears and tremblings; and these stolen visits of unknown and wild-looking men—ay, and other things—possess it with a strong though vague dread of some great misfortune to happen.—Heaven forgive *you*, Louise Danville, for hindering Philip and me, when he was beginning, in his

first feelings, to tell me the naked truth!" pursued Lady Dorcas, much excited.

"I pray you, dear Lady Dorcas, may I inquire what degree of relationship there is between you and your brother and that young gentlewoman," asked Patrick, glad of what he thought was an opportunity to change the direct current of the conversation.

"None, sir, not a link," replied Lady Dorcas; "and I am not afflicted that there is not, although I once wished there might have been. I own to you, Mr. O'Burke,—and do not too quickly call me fickle-minded upon the avowal—that I have loved Mistress Louise more than she will lately let me love her. And this must seem so strange to you, seeing the young lady one of our family, and having witnessed, I hope, our great interest in her, that, as my brother's much-esteemed friend, I deem I owe you further explanation.

"I first met Louise Danville when we were both mere children, in my convent in Spain. She was there, like myself, a class pupil. I liked her from the outset, and she seemed devoted to me, and still more won on me by a great, indeed an excessive zeal and attention. The people and the ways of the convent were new to me; she had been there since her infancy, and of course was well used to both; and when she found that her experience was of service to me, and that I was thankful for it, her whole leisure time seemed occupied with making me happy, and doing me kindnesses in a thousand little ways, the day long.

"As we began to grow out of mere childhood,—I first, for I was her elder by a few years,—this extreme devotion to me did not seem so agreeable as it had been. I felt, though perhaps not distinctly, that it left neither of us enough independent of the other; that I could now dispense with much of it; and that she would appear as a more dignified friend, if she would of herself permit me to do so. But she would not: nay, upon the strength of thus embarrassing me with a great many trifling favours which I did not want, it did appear now and then, that Louise, in her own immatured or immaturable judgment, supposed she had a right to play the mistress over me.

"As neither by nature nor temper I was in much danger of allowing her such a sway, I could not avoid disliking the attempts to establish it; and so our early, and often deeply-vowed friendship was likely to end in very little, when something happened to rivet it anew. The Superior of the house

formally summoned her to an audience one day, and Louise returned to our little sitting-room in much sorrow. I could not long remain ignorant of the cause. Being deemed of an age to think for herself, the Superior had spoken with her of her prospects in life. Hitherto, Louise had never considered the subject. Her recollections did not carry her beyond the convent gates; she knew of no other home—no other world: it was the world to her; she knew of no other friends but those she saw around her in it. Now she learned that she had no other; that her mother was dead, discarded by her family; her father—the poor desolate Louise burst into bitter tears—her father had abandoned her and her mother in early infancy; and she was a child of the convent—taken in for charity—and ever since brought up by the Superior.

"So wretched a tale as this, and her great affliction, her pouring tears, blotted out all her little faults, and all my little dislikes to them; and our friendship was renewed in a form more likely to last. I quitted the convent for the court; but not before I had promised that we should be companions during our lives; that I would come back for her whenever my brother should take me to Ireland, and that we should leave Spain together. Before entering into this serious engagement, however, I had obtained Philip's consent to it; he had even passingly seen Louise, and observed nothing in her character or manners to make him disapprove of her as my constant fireside friend.

"He saw her passingly, Mr. O'Burke, then, when he came to escort me from the convent to the house of our noble friend and relation at court; and if he saw nothing in her unfitted for my confidence, neither did he see aught to stamp her image particularly on his mind. But *she* saw *him*, and although but as passingly, permitted him to make a very different impression upon her. I did not guess so at the time; such appears to have been the case, however. Philip has a gallant way, a French way, I believe, or half French and half Irish, of saying foolish things to almost every woman he meets—nay, woman, or girl, or growing girl, I believe, it is nearly all the same with him. Louise Danville, at their first short interview, was more girl than woman, and as much child as either; and (according to his fashion ever since he wore a beard, or even had hopes of one, as I am told) he addressed her laughingly and flatteringly, but still—for I noticed it—with the kind of easy, impudent condescension which men fops, and especially well-looking ones, put on towards attractive women that are to be.

"Years rolled on. He settled his law disputes here—(oh, Mr. O'Burke, those law disputes! Heaven shield us against a fresh one! and now you have part of my mind upon Philip's present mysterious conduct)—and he came for the last time to Spain, to take me back with him to dear Ireland. We returned to the convent for Louise Danville. She became our adopted sister; she joined us almost instantly upon our homeward journey. Although she had advanced more towards a womanly age than when Philip first met her, his playful manner scarce changed towards her. Again he whispered mock speeches in her ear, and would take her hand, and—" Patrick saw the narrator blush, though it was nearly twilight—"and once, Mr. O'Burke, I saw him offer, without a repulse, a closer little freedom, though belike—though surely—an innocent one too. It seemed to me, however, that it was my duty to address both him and her apart, and to tell them I thought such pastime wrong. Philip, the graceless Philip, laughed at me, in course, and some such words as 'Tut, the poor little convent novice! what dreams she of sinning?' But the moment I spoke to Louise, her secret was shown plainly at once. I need not farther hint what I mean, Mr. O'Burke. If I mistake not, you have yourself guessed it, sometime since."

Patrick admitted that he had noticed in Mistress Louise's manner, symptoms of a passion too strong for disguise.

"Well, Mr. O'Burke, judge me then if I have not some cause for jealousy of my former friend. I do not agree with you, that her feelings are too strong for disguise. No, they are not; such feelings ought to be, and can be, restrained in the bosom of every woman; at least, from making the show of them which Louise Danville does. They ought most especially to be subdued, or well struggled with, whenever it is plain that they direct themselves to an unattainable object. And it is this which causes my lack of love in Louise's regard. Not only she is indifferent to a display of her sentiments, but she is not enough modest even to recollect that Philip of Crana is a flight above her. God knows, Mr. O'Burke, I do not here speak or think of any unfortunate circumstance of poor Louise Danville's parentage, that I may hold it up to uncharitable remark: I humbly hope I may escape the censure I should deserve, even from myself, for such want of feeling, by appealing to my conduct towards her. But when it is so plain that the last and only representative of an ancient and noble family must form an alliance according to his birth—nay, when

it is politic, needful, necessary, that the future mistress of Crana Castle shall add, by her friends, to its safety, in these times of hatred against fellow Christians; ay, and redeem some of its best acres, placed in jeopardy by Philip's late losses at law;—when all this is so very plain, I own it does rouse my anger, to see poor Louise Danville selfishly throw out to my brother the temptation of an almost avowed preference—a temptation against which, I fear, few of his sex are at all moments proof."

"Perhaps, owing to her inexperience, she does not weigh the matter as you do?" observed Patrick: "perhaps, in fact, she does not see it in the same view, therefore cannot weigh it at all."

"She ought to have so seen it long ago, sir; for I will not hide from you that—without particular mention of her feelings for Philip—I have often hinted to her how he ought to wive, according to all natural course of things."

"And how did she receive your opinions, Lady Dorcas?" asked Patrick.

"As a wayward child does any advice for its good: and yet with a vehemence of self-will which makes me alarmed at the probability of her passion breaking out in disappointment," answered Lady Dorcas; "in fact, Mr. O'Burke, knowing my ideas on the subject, she has lately resented them so far as to refuse to converse with me, and once or twice I have detected her fixing upon my face looks of any thing but good-will. So that, sir, along with Philip's concealed whisperings here, with the men who visit us every evening, Louise Danville—her presence in our house—as a member of our family—begins to make me very unhappy."

"Her requital for your kindness to her cannot be called grateful, of a certainty," said Patrick.

"Let that pass: her own heart may judge the question. But, in truth, Mr. O'Burke, the idea has seized upon my mind, that Louise Danville is doomed to aid others—whoever they are—and whatever they purpose—in working harm,—perhaps ruin, to the last of the Walshes of Crana."

Lady Dorcas's voice broke as she uttered these words; and Patrick, observing that she was much agitated, strove all he could to remove from his fair friend's imagination the dispiriting prepossessions which filled it. Nothing, he insisted, could seem more improbable than that danger or mischance, in any shape, menaced her family—except it might be, indeed, the

supposition that Mistress Louise was to prove herself one of the agents in bringing about an event of the kind.

"I cannot argue with you, Mr. O'Burke," resumed Lady Dorcas: "but are there not true impressions which lie too deep for the demonstration of your schools?—I am not singular," she added, in a low and fear-imparting voice, "in pronouncing Louise Danville an ill-starred visiter for Crana."

"Your brother is also of your opinion?" demanded Patrick, in some surprise.

"No, no," answered his companion, shaking her head—"would to Heaven he were!"

"And may I inquire, who then?"

"Oh, you are a man, and of course, a sage, Mr. O'Burke, and will make little of my authority; for it rests on the word of only a poor, unlettered woman, and an old one too."

Patrick, eagerly declaring how disinclined he was to treat lightly any person or any thing which Lady Dorcas considered in a serious light, begged of her to continue.

"There is an old follower of our family, Mr. O'Burke, who has nursed my mother, ay, and her mother before her, I believe, and she lives in a little hut on the other side of the wood, passing her last years in peaceful preparation for another world. Her reputation for wisdom was a proverb at Crana, before I was born. I remember, in my early infancy, to have heard my dear mother (heaven rest her soul!) speak gravely and respectfully of the gifts of Jane Heffernan, and no servant or relation of the house but will be your warrant, that Jane has given warning, in some concealed hint or other, of every misfortune which befel the family for three generations."

"Well," said Patrick,—upon whom, "man and sage" as he was, this character of the old prophetess made an impression—"is she alive still?"

"She came up to the castle and spoke with me a few days after our coming from the North, Mr. O'Burke," replied Lady Dorcas, "and so I arrive at the point of information you require. Louise Danville was at work with her needle in the window-recess when Jane, bent double, tottered on her gold-headed cane into the room to me; and no sooner had she seated herself, and fixed her glossy gray eyes on that young gentlewoman, than she leaned over towards me, made a signal that I should incline my ears to her lips, and whispered,—"Send her out of the ould place, *ma graw bawn*—she brings no luck into it."

This anecdote affected Patrick in two ways, each almost

opposed to the other. His surprise was in the first instance called up by detecting in Lady Dorcas's character so distinct an acquiescence in the popular beliefs of the time: recollecting the primitive education she had received abroad, immediately after quitting the nursery of Crana castle, he forgave her, however. And next, extraordinary as it may seem, he began himself to bestow some attention upon Jane Hefferman's implied augury. In truth, although he would have been far from committing his wisdom so decidedly as Lady Dorcas had done her's, in support of any case of supernatural influence, he was not quite free of misgivings which then possessed the bosoms, and presided over the legislation of the greatest men in England and Ireland. It is not meant to be insinuated that Jane Hefferman was a witch, or had ever made use of her "gifts," so as to expose herself to the charge of being one; but for the purposes of illustration merely, it is added, that many years after the time here spoken of, women were tried for witchcraft, in the most considerable towns in Patrick's country, by judges and juries too, of the mode of worship called least superstitious.

"Did you not ask the old woman to be more explicit?" he demanded, after a pause.

"I did, sir; but her only answer on that particular head, was—'she is not lucky, *ma-vourneen*.' Soon after, however, old Jane asked me a question," continued Lady Dorcas, in the very cadence of sad foreboding.

From her previous words, Patrick concluded the question could not have been an alarming one.

"Judge," answered Lady Dorcas—"this was it—'An' hav'n't you heard the Banshee of the Cranas ever since ye came home to us?'"

"Your arm, I pray you, Lady Dorcas—the honour of your arm—" interrupted Patrick, glancing into the interior of the wood upon which, for some time, they had been standing.

"Willingly, and let us speed homeward," she replied, accepting his support—"the same figure caught my notice among the trees."

"I saw but a man—a stranger though," said Patrick, "and strangely appointed here—armed."

"It was the same—" she rejoined: "to the castle,"

CHAPTER XXI.

In one of the round towers of the castle, Lady Dorcas had fitted up a little sitting-apartment, sacred to herself whenever she chose to be alone, yet it was more generally frequented, with her permission, by Louise Danville, her brother, and his visiter, than were the spacious state-rooms in the body of the building. Here she had her books, her birds, her music, her flowers; from the window the prospect abroad was extensive and select; and the pleasantest evenings known in Crana castle, since the arrival of its young occupants, had been spent in the deep recess of that window, while the red harvest sun went down behind the distant mountains.

To it the eyes of Lady Dorcas and Patrick now turned on their hasty walk homeward, in anticipation of the hour of tranquil enjoyment, which both hoped they should yet experience at its casement, before the usual time of repose. It was open, and a young moon struck brilliantly into it, showing the heads and shoulders of two figures, seated a little way within. "Who can they be?" wondered Lady Dorcas. She increased her speed, and soon recognised her brother and Louise Danville, although their backs were turned to the window, and but so little of their persons visible. Another glance told her that Philip's arm was round his young companion's neck, and that Louise did not seem dissatisfied with his freedom: on the contrary, that she inclined her head so as almost to lean it upon his shoulder.

Lady Dorcas and Patrick stood still. Philip's voice reached them, though not his words: his accents sounded gayly and sportively. Soon after, they heard low and broken sounds from Louise, which he interrupted again in all but a bantering tone. Her voice rose higher; she appeared to appeal to him in great emotion; he laughed good-humouredly: she started up, flinging away his arm; he also arose, and both disappeard into the interior of the room.

Lady Dorcas and Patrick were soon in the little *boudoir*. Louise Danville did not appear; but Philip was half kneeling at a door, which led into an inner chamber, and, between fits of laughter, entreating her, in mock supplication, to come out to him. The real matter of the previous conversation between

them, of which Lady Dorcas and her confidant had witnessed but a part of the dumb show, will here be necessary.

After her friends had that evening gone out to walk, Louise Danville, as usual, refusing to accompany them, sat alone at her elaborate embroidery. Her bosom had never been so ill at rest. Day by day, Philip Walshe's indifference to her became more manifest; her own love for him more uncontrollable, and her childish yet fierce sense of disappointment more violent. Lady Dorcas's disguised hints as to the alliance Philip ought to make, had also sunk deep into her fretting heart. Of these hints, Lady Dorcas herself has already spoken to a certain extent. She omitted to inform Patrick, however, of one, and by far the most important one, which she had ventured to give to her love-sick friend; namely, that a family of great consideration, in an adjoining county, were disposed to admit his attentions to their beautiful, accomplished, and wealthy daughter. And, perhaps, the reason why Lady Dorcas left Patrick ignorant on this point was, that in intimating a contemplated marriage to Louise, she had gone somewhat beyond facts, for the purpose of warning that young person against the indulgence of her feelings.

There was an additional source of the swellings of bitterness within Louise Danville's soul. With the quickness of a woman's eye, she saw that Lady Dorcas, while thus indirectly opposing her life's hopes, was herself yielding up her heart to Patrick O'Burke, and worse—was beloved by him to an excess of devotion. And that Philip of Crana's sister—her lecturer—a very screech-owl of bad omen in her ears—perhaps the bar between her hopes and their accomplishment—that she should experience all the happiness of love returned, nay, overpaid, while Louise Danville sat down neglected, forsaken,—(for so she imagined herself to be)—wronged, and despised—this was a stinging thought to the vehement convent girl, and it goaded and smarted her, until she said in her heart, after glancing at some glow of satisfaction in Dorcas's face, while they sat together—"I hate you!"

Stealthily, upon this evening, she watched Philip, Dorcas, and Patrick, go out upon their ramble, and all the feelings attributed to her worked as she gazed after them along the sunny patch which led to the nearest wood. Evil impulses to revenge for the supposed injury inflicted on her, had before now darted through her mind. At present, she allowed them more than usual scope. "Yes," she muttered, clenching her little hand, and holding it up in threat, "Do—do go away from

Crana, to kneel down with your false speeches before another lady,—do—do forget and forswear your words and looks to me,—do leave me, for my whole life long, a thing that *she* may point the finger at." A sudden burst of passionate tears interrupted the oath of vengeance she was about to make; she wept and sobbed convulsively; she almost screamed; and leaning her arm against the recess of the window, and her head upon her arm, delivered herself up to the fit. And it was strange that throes of wild and wayward tenderness were now mixed up with her anger against Philip Walshe.

Some time elapsed, and she did not hear a quick and joyous step coming up the winding stone-stairs of the tower. It was Philip, after conversing with his courier, and he was all impatience to say a few words of happy tidings to Patrick O'Burke, and to indulge, before his sister's face, the unaffected good spirits which those tidings were his warrant for experiencing. He was sure that both must have returned before him to the castle.

He entered the apartment, calling out their names, in an echo of his former gay tones: and—"What?" he continued, "a-gadding abroad yet? becoming sworn 'minions of the moon?' I suspected as much, and so, even let them—ah! my own little passion!" Philip went on, seeing Louise in the window-recess—"And what do you, moping here, at home, and others so gleeish in the fair moonlight?—or I either? Come! shall we have a race together along the wood-path? — What say you?—Angry with me, and will not answer?" He approached close to her. "No, not angry, but worse, I see—crying—and why, dear Louise?" taking her hand. "Are you not happy among us?—what frets you?—Only tell Philip Walshe what, and he will visit fairy land, where you ought to be queen, or get a charm to make you smile."

She allowed him to take and retain her hand, but did not raise her head, nor speak to him. She continued to weep, but her tears were softer than those she had been shedding. He resumed.

"Nay, my dainty Louise, this is wormwood to poor me. Since you will not give me your mind to-night, forget the cause of your grief until to-morrow, whatever it is. I want to be very happy for a few hours to come; and since you refuse the moonlight out of doors, let me seat you in it here at the window. She allowed him to lead her to a stool and sit by her side.

"There now—and now let us do the infectious light due

honour, and be what all ought to be, who court it to shine on them—lovers;—lovers of poetical mood and spirit. Will you speech to me in rhyme, if I so open with you?—but first, the action to the word"—he stole his arm round her drooping neck;—she was passive, because surprised into the joy of having him so near her—"And so—to begin,—but hold—I forget—you told me once you were too young—or too little—no—too young to know how to make love-speeches, either in prose or in rhyme, did you not?"

"That was some years ago," she said.

"Ay!—yes—now that I remember, sure enough it was; and in the years that have since passed lies the difference—is it not so?"

"They have brought no difference to me."

"Then you are still too—I know not what—but too something for it?"

"Perhaps—for love-*speeches*."

"Oh! but not for love-*thoughts*. In good earnest, my little passion, and really, and indeed now, answer me—*Can* they come into your dear little head so soon?" The childish appearance, and, in every respect but one, the childish mental manners of Louise had, indeed, to this hour, kept the indifferent and not very observant Philip from considering her capable of even comprehending the subject they spoke on. "I am curious in my studies of Mistress Nature," he continued—"an humble philosopher in that way, if it please you; so, I pray you, my dear, enlighten me,—*can* they?"

"If you supposed they could not before now, it was idle of you, at the least, to address me as if they could," she answered.

"What! to swear so often by the blue sky, and all in it, that I loved you to the death?"

"Yes; I mean such idle perjuries."

"Perjuries? no, on my soul, truths!"

Continuing to regard her as an irresponsible person in this discussion, he now supposed that his late absence of manner had hurt or offended her childish pride; that therefore she was afflicted; and that to relieve her, he had only to renew his former trifling, using language which, with an almost child, would but convey the soothing idea of being an object of interest to him.

"Truths, my Mab! Truths that I will uphold before the world!—and so, now be friends with me once again, and let it tell me what it never yet spoke out plain to me, the dainty

dearee—let it whisper into my ear, that for the universe of true love I offer, it gives me one little nut-shell full in return: let it say so now; there; let it—" his voice grew really kind, for he wished to beguile her into good-humour, and he mumbled the last words with his lips touching her cheek. He was answered in a way he dreamed not of. Again the inexperienced and self-blinding girl believed him serious and sincere, and thrown off her guard by the intoxicating happiness of her feelings, she said, in a low voice, but one that no child could feign, "As much love, and as great a love, as a woman ever gave, I give you in return."

Philip slightly started, and drew back his lips from her wet though burning cheek. His philosophy gained a new light. And his first thought was of the call loudly made upon him to undeceive and divert the feelings to which he had given rise in the bosom of his poor little playmate. Yet, according to his nature and character, he allowed himself to be amused the next instant at the ridiculous part he was enacting; and in a mixture of both those humours, he went on, almost instantly after her impassioned avowal—"To be sure, to be sure, my empress of tiny beauties, great in extent and in kind must be the love you have for me; and even so great are my thanks; ay, and my faithful wish to reward it with a life of humble services; as thus—to make a scheme. Hitherto you have led but a triste time of it in this old castle; indeed, I have been sad myself since our arrival from far North."

"I know it," she observed.

"But, my passion, merrier days are in store for us: I see it will soon be a race between Dorcas and me, which shall first reach the marrying-post; and, no matter which—then shall the old walks blaze, and the old rafters ring, and you be the crowned queen of all our revellings and pleasures; none other will Dorcas choose for her chief bride's-maid, I am sure; and none other shall Philip Walshe's lady choose either, if he have words or wit to guide her choice; and so—"

"What do you speak of, now?" she interrupted: "brides' maids and brides? who? how?"

"My fay-love so innocent, indeed? Heaven help it then, it shall hear the riddle read; thus—"

"I read it without help, at a question," she resumed; "Whom mean you to be first bride's maid at your coming wedding?"

"Why, have I not spoken the speech plainly?—you, child."

"Villain!" and with this word she started from his side,

flinging away his arm, walked rapidly across the room, entered the inner chamber, furiously shut to the door, and bolted it.

"Well," soliloquized Philip Walshe; "I am a most beflattered gallant in this matter, of a certainty;" and yielding to the sense of the absurd, which was a foremost trait in his character, he laughed heartily, approached the door she had made fast, knelt at it, and in this situation was found by his sister and his friend, speaking in through the key-hole.

A few words to Lady Dorcas explained how matters stood between him and Louise, and he laughed again, and was now joined in his mirth by his sister, loud enough to be heard in the next chamber,—at least, Dorcas wished that such might be the case.

"Go, Dorcas, and beseech her forth to us," continued Philip, in a whisper: "'tis a pettish, irrational little body, but must meet nothing but kindness from us still."

"I know it," answered his sister; "and, except in this one whim, God sees I wish to be a real sister to her—" and she advanced to the door.

"O'Burke, fair news," resumed Philip, taking Patrick aside, and shaking his hand—"Poor Roger!—" his voice and his smiles together failed him.

"Is at large?" demanded Patrick.

"He is, lad—and we shall see him to-night in the castle; at present, he lingers not far off, and as soon as the night grows quieter, and that people are out of the way, old Rory will steal him in to us."

Patrick returned the joyous pressure of Philip's hand, and was going to mention having seen an armed stranger in the wood, when they were interrupted.

Lady Dorcas had begun to address Louise Danville through the closed door in a very gentle and conciliating tone of voice, but received no answer. Presently, while her brother and O'Burke spoke aside, her words and accents became more earnest; and at length, slightly yielding to impatience, she said—"Unbolt the door, I entreat you, child, and sit down among us, like a person of sense."

She was instantly obeyed. The bolt shot back, the door flew open, and Louise stepped out.

"Child!—and you too, Lady Dorcas Walshe, have caught up his insulting word? caught up!—have you not taught him to speak it of me!—have you not? ye can laugh together, too, at the poor, friendless convent girl?—meanwhile, that the

Lady Dorcas herself is woman complete, to waste hours of moonlight in the wood with her own dear friend ?"

"Louise !" remonstrated Lady Dorcas, in great confusion, as she offered to take her hand,— "have a care, have a care."

"Have a care, you, Mademoiselle !" retorted Louise, retiring from her—"and you also Philip Walshe, have a care !—Between ye both, I stand outraged and taunted to-night—here, in your strange land—here, in your house—decoyed from my peaceful convent, and dragged with ye through the cold world, only to be so treated !"

"Dear Louise !" pleaded Philip.

"Silence, sir !" she exclaimed, stamping her small foot—"Dare not to insult me once again by the language that has deceived me !—the language that has broken my heart—" she was about to yield to tears, but her phrensy blazed out anew before one single tear could damp it—"the language that has made me mad ?—ay, Dorcas Walshe—ay, Philip Walshe, have a care !—Philip Walshe, though I call you no Baron of Crana ;" —she almost ran, passed them, left the apartment, and rapidly descended the stairs of the tower.

Philip looked expressively at O'Burke, now not in a mood to renew his laughter at the extravagance of the infatuated Louise : her last words shot coldly to his heart. Lady Dorcas gazed from one to another of the friends : she also had caught those words. All remained silent for some time. Philip broke the disagreeable pause.

"Well, I can but say I am a dangerous fellow to trust in women's company any age from twelve to sixty, at the least—" endeavouring to resume his gayety ; "I must needs forget all my conquests now, however, for an hour or so, to sit down in the old library and pen a letter of business—so, good-by, sister, but not for the night, if possible," and he left the boudoir as suddenly as Louise had done.

"Now, Mr. O'Burke," said Lady Dorcas, sitting down in the window-recess, "you will perhaps give some thought to my forebodings of evil to us all from Louise Danville."

"You allude to what she said at parting," answered Patrick ; "it was indeed a strange speech, yet surely as wild and unmeaning as strange."

"God grant it !" resumed Lady Dorcas, her accents scarce audible, while she seemed to shudder. Of a sudden she started, crying "Hist !" and bent her head in a listening attitude. "It was from the great wood it came," she resumed, addressing Patrick.

"What?" he asked, observing that her cheeks were very pale in the moonshine, and her eyes glittering with excitement.

"What?" he asked a second time, in a whisper.

"That low wailing," she replied.

"I heard it not; and surely there was no such thing," he said. "Come, Lady Dorcas, let us leave this solitary chamber, and repair to the more frequented part of the castle, where we shall find cheerful lights and faces; the place and the hour have an effect on your spirits. Come, allow me to lead you down."

"You remember old Jane's question to me?" inquired Lady Dorcas, not seeming to have heard him; "the question I told you of abroad in the grounds this evening, when we were interrupted, and could speak no farther? You do—I see it in your looks. Well, I answered her; and doubtless, in your wisdom, you will smile to hear how. Do so, if it please you; only remember that my word of truth is at stake."

"And you answered—yes?" demanded Patrick.

"I did—I answered yes; for three times that I had heard the warning spirit of our family; and for twice that I had *seen*, as well as heard."

Patrick O'Burke drew back in his seat, and uttered, below his breath, an ejaculation of surprise and awe: for whether or no Lady Dorcas laboured under a delusion, there could be no question of the deep sincerity of her conviction that she did not.

"First, O'Burke, about three days after we arrived in the castle, I could not sleep one night for the lament of the Banshee; it came sometimes to the windows of my chamber; sometimes it sunk low into the court-yard; sometimes it mounted over the roof; and the voice was so full of grief, of utter heart-breaking grief, as it were, that its cadences, as well as my thought of the coming wo it foretold, made me weep and sob in my bed."

"It was a stormy night?" asked Patrick.

"It was as mild a night as ever reigned in the heavens. You are incredulous, O'Burke; but you need not be. Nothing is better known of our family than that it has had its Banshee since the days of its founder, always giving notice of approaching misfortune—death, or persecution, or poverty, as Heaven might have willed. Look out with me from this window—look across all the hills and valleys near to us, and rest your eye upon the top of that distant, rocky mountain, which is barely visible—a shade and a line against the moon-lit sky. In

former times, that mountain was ours, and the estate of the Walshes ran from their castle—ay, and from far behind their castle—to its opposite base; and upon its craggy and lonesome summit, where a human foot never sounded, there the Banshee had her bed."

"'Tis a sweet fancy, if not as true a story," remarked Patrick; "and a like story, be it true or false, was told me in my boyhood of a *Banshee* of my own family; but a poet of my father's acquaintance would have our attendant spirit a politician merely, only bewailing our national misfortunes in her distant bed, and finally bidding adieu to sorrow of every kind, at the prospect (miscalculated, however, Banshee, though it was) of good luck to Ireland before the breaking out of the last Civil wars. I quote the meaning of the song the poet made."

"I know the song," said Lady Dorcas; "judge if I do." She took up a guitar, and touching it, sang the following words to a slow moaning air:—

"Oh, my bed,
At the head
Of the water none have found;
Where it wells,
Mid the swells
Of the hill-top's broken ground!
For a time,
And a time,
And through changes of the clime,
There I've lain,
To complain,
And wail and weep the fall
Of the mighty and the grand,
Of Erin's widow'd land,
Who, when gone,
Left not one,
On her name aloud to call.

Oh, my wail
Did prevail
O'er the world—old silence there,
Till no bird
Near me stirr'd,
To scream to it in the air—
Till the dun rocks wore to gray,
And the wild shrubs wore away,
And I thought
'Twas my lot,
Still bewailing her to stay
Until the end of all;
Because ever since her fall

None would shout
Her name out,
And let me hear the call!

Oh, at last,
On the blast,
From the plains of men below,
It has come,
To make dumb
My long, long voice of wo—
That echo of old fame!
That shout for her old name!
And at last,
For the past,
I may hush my grief and shame!
And, as my gray rocks mute,
Watch my waters as they shoot
Through the cleft,
Open left,
From the old tree's crumbled root."

"Thanks," said Patrick, "for an old ditty, which awakens many of the bitter-sweet recollections of childhood and boyhood;" and he was glad to believe that the mention of the song, and her singing it, had helped to chase away the sad fancies, or realities, of which she had been speaking. He mistook, however; for after a short and thoughtful pause, she resumed abruptly, though her tones were still low.

"The next night that I heard it, O'Burke, and it was about a week afterward, I arose, dressed myself, and, strengthened by a strange curiosity, listened until the Banshee's cries came close to my window. Then I quickly pulled aside the shutters and saw her face—if face I may call it—disappearing from the glass in the darkness."

"Could they have been less unearthly features?" still questioned Patrick.

"My chamber is a tall tree's height from the ground," she answered. "And after that, the voice was silent for the night; nor did I again hear or see the Banshee till the very last night."

"Last night, Lady Dorcas?"

"You shall hear. I had not lain down to repose, but sat reading. Her lament arose at a distance in the direction of the great wood, and came nearer and nearer by degrees, till as before, it gained my window. Again I moved to open the shutters; at my first step, it ascended upwards, and rested at the top story of the castle. I left my chamber, mounted to the

uninhabited one over it, and boldly challenged the spirit, whose face, and part of whose form, half covered with a scarlet cloak, or the seeming of such, appeared also there at an unclosed window. My hasty words were not spoken when it a second time withdrew, and its wail died away gradually in the quarter whence it had approached the castle. O'Burke, made desperate by my fears for the fate of my family and myself, I was soon after in the great wood. I was aware where the castle keys lay, and used them. You know the open spot in the wood, near its centre, which we once thought beautifully lonesome and fearful, in the reign of the moon. Ere I gained that place, I could see into it; and there, still lamenting and weeping her unearthly tears, there the Banshee sat, upon a shattered stump, winding up her long yellow hair, which streamed over her scarlet cloak in the full moonlight."

"Did the spirit wait for a repetition of your challenge till you gained the opening?" asked Patrick, who recognised in Lody Dorcas's sketch of the Banshee the popular one which since childhood had invariably been impressed on his own mind.

"No. When I stood on the patch of grass, I was alone; nor in my hurried approach to it had I gained more than one or two imperfect glances of the Banshee from between the stems of the trees. And then, O'Burke, my courage, or whatever it was, failed me at finding myself out, unprotected, at such an hour of the night, in such a place, and I ran back wildly, I believe, to the castle; for I can remember little of gaining the portal, or of locking it and the other gates, or even of ascending to my chamber, until, in the glimmer of the morning, I found myself lying on my bed, and recovering, it must have been, from a fainting-fit."

"Or from a dream," was Patrick's reflection; and he was about to submit the probability to her consideration, when Rory Laherty's voice was heard, as he ascended the tower-stairs to the little boudoir.

The old man appeared before Dorcas and Patrick in remarkable agitation, even for him. He at first called out for the Baron of Crana, as if to that individual in particular he wished to communicate the cause of his tremblings. O'Burke soon obtained his confidence, however; and now he began, very strangely, by saying that he had been sent to warn the Baron of Crana that his downfall, and the downfall of his name, was at hand.

"Sent!—by whom?" questioned Lady Dorcas.

He could not tell; he did not know; it all happened in an instant, out by the river-side; and the words, and the vision that spoke them, came and went like "the dash of the moonshine under a cloudy night."

Lady Dorcas had arisen; she sat down again in great emotion. Her late mood of mind, and the subject which had engaged it, helped to make this vague announcement almost terrible to her. Patrick pressed Rory to be more explicit; but either he could not, having already imparted his story as distinctly as its circumstances were stamped on his own comprehension, or else his impatience to speak with Philip Walshe would not allow him to collect his senses and arrange his words; for while yet exhorted to state what he meant in a clearer manner, the old man hurried down the stairs, crying out for "The Baron of Crana! the last Baron of Crana!"

To understand the real cause of his alarm, Louise Danville shall be followed, after her sudden departure from the tower.

Her friends only supposed that she left them to vent her excessive passion in the solitude of her own chamber. From the door which led thither, however, she turned her quick steps, and issued through the portal of the castle, then through the embattled entrance in the ballium, and flitted towards the river-side—Heaven knows in what impulse to evil! She had declared herself to have been made mad; reason certainly had little sway over her present temper. To any one who should have met her at this moment, her face would have told the fury of her heart and the weakness of her mind, for no extreme of provocation warranted its vehement expressions. Her eyes rolled; her dark cheek was unearthly pale; specks of foam were at the corners of her mouth; her lips stood wide apart, and her teeth were set, and sometimes her under-jaw moved, grinding them together. And in a face so young, and even so attractive, and thrown out by a heart enshrined in so slight a frame, such passion was peculiarly frightful.

Within sight of the river, broken sentences escaped her. "My back to you, accursed Crana!—the sole of my foot to your ground"—spurning it—"for the last time! Wherever I go, if ever I pass through this black night, or cross that shining water, the world is wide enough to afford me a corner, far, far away from your gates! Wide enough it is, too, and ready enough to let me plan my requital to them!" She now stood near the river's brink, upon a shelving bank, which hid much of the strand beneath her; and here she paused, stamping her heel in

the crumbling soil, her hands clenched at her side, while she unconsciously gave vent to her rage, and to her unshaped threats of vengeance upon Philip of Crana.

A man's head rose above the bank on which she stood; it would seem that he had been sitting under its shadow. She knew him as soon as their eyes met, and was not startled, on the contrary, she clapped her hands together, and uttered a cry at once of recognition and satisfaction.

"I told you we should speak of the Dunluce matter again, fair mistress," said John Gernon.

"And is it to speak of it again you have broken the ropes I saw you tied in there, and have come hither to-night?" she asked.

"Not without shch hopes am I here to-night," he replied; "although my direct business is to watch about the mouth of that hole over your head for the return to his nightly nest of an outlaw, whose capture, dead or alive, will bring something to my poke, in lieu of a gift of yours, mistress, that I was plundered of."

"Yes, yes; they cheated you—that makes you amends again;" and scarce knowing what she did, though in a vague feeling to conciliate the bravo, Louise flung him her purse; then she turned her head to glance at the place behind her of which he had spoken. The river-path was here narrowed by shelving rocks of considerable height, of which the bases almost touched the skirts of her robe as she stood. At about a third part of the distance up towards their summit was a small fissure, barely wide enough to admit a man's body, though it was known to open into a large cave, which in the first rage of the law against priests some years before, had been the hiding-place of a celebrated ecclesiastic, as well as the rendezvous of many of his scattered or disguised flock, to join him in weekly devotions; and thenceforward it had borne the name of Polh-an-Aiffrin, or mass-cave.

"I see," resumed Louise Danville, speaking incoherently; "a brave sleeping-chamber the outlaw has chosen, and I wish you all success in surprising him asleep. You are a man of some power and weight, sir," she continued, in a certain view, "to be intrusted with such an enterprise; and also to escape, as you needs must have done, the ropes and the menaces of the people in whose hands I last saw you?"

"Oh, mistress," replied Gernon, "they meant me little harm, although they thought it prudent to make a show of treating

me as a prisoner to the faces of your excellent friends that night."

"My friends!" she repeated, bitterly.

"Ah!" questioned John Gernon, laughing ironically; "you have found them out, then?"

"I have," she answered.

"As I told you," he observed, "at Dunluce."

"Ay, found them out, and more concerning them than they should like to know from my lips," resumed Louise Danville.

"Or from mine, I warrant you—I guess what you mean, mistress." He did, indeed, guess, though his guess was a very uncertain one.

"How is that, sir?" she demanded.

"Tut!—when you stole tiptoe after Philip Walshe and Master Patrick O'Burke that time, outside the ruins we had all been standing in; and when you stooped behind the big stone to listen to their secret, do you think, mistress, that my eyes, or feet, or ears, either, were idle?"

"You overheard them then, as I did?"

"Every word." In this answer John Gernon deliberately told a falsehood; but he as deliberatly pursued a long-cherished purpose—one, indeed, laid up in his mind since the night they spoke of. From having watched Louise conceal herself behind the stone, whence Philip Walshe caught a glimpse of her figure returning to the ruins, he felt assured that she had learned the particulars of the true cause of the young Baron's emotion: from having himself overheard Philip's first suspicious words to Lady Dorcas, he shrewdly concluded that the explanation afterward given by the brother to the sister was mere fiction: from having marked the unguarded petulance of Louise Danville, and conjectured its cause, he soon measured her character; and upon the weaknesses and hastiness of that character were built schemes which he now carried into effect, word by word, as she and he thus suddenly and strangely conversed together.

"Ay, indeed?" cried Louise, questioning, though little doubting, his last assertion,—"Then you know, as well as I do, who is the real living Baron of Crana?" and she spoke in a tone and manner of exultation.

"Huth!—to be sure I do!" he replied, with the assumed indifference of confidence. "Listen, bachelors!" he whispered, stooping for an instant under the bank—then he resumed his speech to her: "The living Roger Walshe, the elder brother of Philip, is the real living Baron of Crana."

"He is!" assented the beguiled and miserable girl, the triumph of her voice increased.

"Roger Walshe, lately calling himself Randal Oge O'Hagan!" continued Gernon, encouraging her excitement, by using violent tones, like her own. Again she confirmed his statement.

"And this you heard, fair mistress, told by Philip Walshe to Patrick O'Burke?"

A third time Louise Danville was about to reply to Gernon, but found herself interrupted. A creature—so unlike a breathing human being in features, limbs, and attire, that his appearance imparted supernatural fear—stood on a ledge of rock under the Poll-an-Aiffrin, and in a hoarse whisper, broken by snatches of a weak scream, called on her by her name to be silent. This apparition was worn to skin and bone, and had upon his naked body only the shreds of something like a blanket; his long grizzled hair and neglected beard fell down his shoulders, and disguised his mouth and cheeks; his eyes were half-pursed up in relaxed wrinkles, and yet they gave out a glassy lustre in the moonlight.

"Good even, Father James!" shouted Gernon;—"Caught at last, sir!—stand!" and he presented a carabine. Father James it was. He had wandered from the North to the South, no one could conjecture how; and here, as it afterward appeared, he had fixed his residence, among a people quite strangers to him, and even unacquainted with his hidden calling, only attracted by the celebrated cave which once had sheltered another outlaw priest. Whether before to-night he had been aware of his proximity to some of his old friends, it became impossible to learn.

In answer to Gernon's salutation and challenge, he ran along the ledge of rock, and then by the river-path, towards Crana castle, saying,—"No, no! no stand! none for me now, till my voice is lifted up against your new treachery!"—and he escaped immediate capture; and it was he who, during his wild flight, sent Rory Laherty to Philip Walshe with some imperfectly-delivered warning of the danger in which Louise Danville had placed the family of Crana.

CHAPTER XXII.

After Rory Laherty's departure from the tower, Lady Dorcas and Patrick continued some time there together. The conversation between them finally took a particular turn, of which more will soon appear. They were interrupted by a message from Philip Walshe to Patrick, requesting his immediate company on pressing business.

Patrick found his host in the old library.

"A despatch for the O'Burke from Pendergast Hall," said Philip, as soon as he entered, pointing to a large and well-sealed letter which lay on the table: "its bearer, just arrived to us, has ridden hard; I pray you, Patrick, sink ceremony, and read it off-hand; for I have other matters to speak on when you are at leisure."

His friend accordingly opened the letter, and began to peruse it. Philip Walshe saw Patrick's features express much agitation: surprise first, and then some deeper feeling; the blood mounted to his cheeks, and moisture trembled on his eyelids.

"No bad news, I trust?" asked Philip.

"None for me, certainly," answered Patrick: "Do me the kindness to read the letter."

He gave it to Philip Walshe, retaining a folded parchment which it had enclosed. It was as follows, under the hand of Miles Pendergast:—

"MY DEAR SON,

"I have undergone great inquietude here in consequence of the late adventures which took place under my roof. Notwithstanding my well-known and, I may say, well-proved loyalty during my whole life, men in authority about me, who fancy themselves still more loyal than I have ever been, applied the severities of the law to me immediately after your departure with your friends, and fined me largely, and even imprisoned me during one calendar month, on the charge of priest-hiding, and of aiding and abetting in the rescue of an outlaw priest, and what not. I have but just regained my liberty. But

while I was a prisoner, I made up my mind to dwell no longer at Pendergast Hall, nor indeed among those who, I believe, have treated me harshly, if not unjustly, to say nothing of ungenerously. And, upon this, I got my estate sold, and turned into sterling money, and the old house is already inhabited by the purchaser, and in a few hours I shall be on my way to see you, dear Patrick, God willing. Offer my friendly respects to the Baron of Crana and Lady Dorcas, and tell them I am a suitor for their hospitality, until I can advise and settle with you what were best for both of us to do in the present turn of fortune.

"For as much thought as I have yet been able to bestow on the matter, it seems to me that we should purchase lands with our ready money somewhere in the South of this country; and that I might live with you, at the least, until you marry, if not afterward (and I boast to myself of making shrewd guesses on that point, but will say no more till I can observe how you and the lady agree together, in her own house, after a month's acquaintance). If you cannot enjoy peace, and the good-will of your neighbours, on account of your religion, in the South, then, I reckon, we must needs think of settling in some foreign country; although, in such a case, I should be the sufferer, for the want of a decorous practice of my own religion; but we are to talk at large on the question.

"Wherever we may be fated to buy our new acres, I will pay half the purchase-money; in this letter you will find a deed, putting you in possession of the other half, which it may become necessary to advance. The whole is the produce of the sale of Pendergast Hall. The large sums which I had in Government securities I have settled on my brothers' children; so that, although they had been somewhat in need, they will henceforth have little to complain of against me, or little cause of jealousy towards my adopted son.

"This letter, sent to apprize you of my coming to Crana castle, will be my herald for no more than some hours, I trust; till when, regard me, my dear Patrick, as, in the heart, though not in blood,

"Your loving father,
"Miles Pendergast."

"The name of an honest Protestant," said Philip Walshe, as he ended the perusal of the letter; "and that is a vast admission from me whom I now and then suspect of being

a bigoted Papist.—Well, Patrick, and what is this about Dorcas?"

"You can best tell what it is *to be*," answered O'Burke.

"Seriously?" demanded Philip.

"Seriously," answered his friend.

"But my sister, surely, is to speak first?"

"Why, I believe I may venture to hint—" began Patrick modestly——

"That she has spoken already?" interrupted Philip.

"Or nearly so."

"When, for Heaven's sake?"

"About half an hour ago; and I did not thank you for sending one to cheat me of the opportunity of hearing her speak a little more, belike Philip—brother Philip—is it?"

"Why, I suppose so, O'Burke," replied Philip, laughing lightly, although he grasped with all his strength the hand which was held out to him, and tears were starting to his eyes —"but I must needs say 'tis a hurried matter."

"We cannot help that," said Patrick; "but now for another topic."

"Yes, yes," replied his friend, in a whisper; "he is to come in here to us. Rory Laherty has been on the watch for him since nightfall, and, as I half told you, is to steal in the poor fellow through the gates, and then through this secret door;" he lifted up some tattered tapestry and showed one:—"And O'Burke, I sent for you to be with me during our conversation, that you may assist us in devising what is best to do."

"But Rory Laherty abandoned his post of watch a while ago?"

"The old fool, he did, and came yelling and romancing to me here, with some story of a moonlight ghost, who would pass for a prophet; but I drove back Rory with a laugh and a loud word, to take up his post again."

"The servants are not to see Roger?"

"No, no," answered Philip Walshe, with a sudden sigh, as he drew in his under-lip: "although here, the poor wanderer is to eat and drink without their attendance; ay, and sleep a night under the old roof."

"And Dorcas? Must she still be excluded from our confidence?" Patrick put this question with the view of assuaging Dorcas's uneasiness on the score of her brother's late mysterious conduct towards her.

"I do not know—I cannot determine yet; much will

depend upon our meeting with poor Roger," was Philip's answer.

"You expect to see him, soon?"

"Every moment, now."

There was a break in their conversation. Philip Walshe sighed quickly again, and the seriousness and anxiety which had been recently coming over his face settled into its fixed expression. After casting his eyes some minutes on the floor, he glanced suddenly towards the door of the library; walked to it; assured himself it was secured; scrutinized the windows in like manner; stopped in the middle of the apartment, clasping his hands before him, and looked thoughtfully around; and then he went to a cupboard, took from it cold viands, wine, and glasses; laid them on the table; arranged the logs of wood which blazed on the large hearth; trimmed the lamp, and with another sigh, sank into a chair.

Patrick did not interrupt his revery. It was, however, soon broken up. Two soft knocks were heard at the private door. He started from his seat, looking expressively into Patrick's face, and raising his finger, he trod lightly, on tiptoe, across the room; raised up the fragments of tapestry; touched a spring-bolt; and, as the brothers embraced, Patrick heard their sobs. They kissed each other's cheeks twice, and then, hand in hand, advanced to the fire; but not before Philip had whispered to the invisible Rory Laherty—"Watch still, and watch well!" and fastened the private door, and let the tapestry fall over it.

The Baron of Crana, Roger Walshe, wore a heavy horseman's cloak, but under it the old regimentals in which Patrick had last seen him, when he was racing across the chasm at the castle of Dunluce; his great jack-boots, and the precise three-cocked hat, edged with tarnished gold-lace, like that on his long-skirted body-coat, which he carried in his hand, were also military. In fact, he was now habited in the identical uniform in which he had marched to bear his part in the battle of Hillsborough, and which, during his late profession, had often served him as one of his convenient disguises.

It was pitiable to note the self-undervaluing air, and the expression of countenance, with which he entered—after having stealthily gained it—one of the rooms in the house of his father's—in his own castle. Patrick O'Burke knew at a glance that he thought of having been long rendered unworthy of occupying it, by his misfortunes and his crimes. His step and carriage also had that want of freedom, and of being at home,

which marks the entry of an humble man into an apartment above his rank in life; years of predatory shifting about, from one mean haunt to another, doubtless, had brought down his mind to this strangeness amid the mute memorials of his early youth.

With eyes wet from the meeting between him and his brother, he looked around him, smiling vaguely, until Philip Walshe directed his attention to the son of his old friend, Sir Redmond O'Burke. Roger, then fixing his eyes on Patrick, and still smiling, stopped short, and muttered inaudibly, and bowed—even not so spiritedly as Patrick had seen him do in his character of John Johnson. He did not offer his hand to his young acquaintance; and when, pitying him, O'Burke stepped forward cordially and extended his, Roger of Crana accepted the salutation with the embarrassment of an inferior.

"Your ride, dear Roger, has given you a mind for a poor supper with us," said Philip.

"Ay, I thank you, Philip," he answered, ungracefully occupying the chair which his brother drew to the fire for him.

"Hold! I make but an indifferent butler or pantry-man," resumed Philip—"we want plates here," and he went to the cupboard.

"And is it turning yourself into waiting-man upon me, you are, Phil, *ma-chree?*" asked Roger, smiling wretchedly, while fresh tears came to his eyes.

"And why not, Roger, dear, for lack of better?" demanded Philip, returning to the table, and laying a hand on his shoulder: "You are my mother's eldest son," he continued, in an impressive voice, "and more—let law-makers say what they will, the rightful lord of this castle, and my master in it."

"Ah! that's foolish talk," was Roger's only reply. They began to make their meal. He continued to be embarrassed even in the little actions and etiquette of the table. Patrick reflected how much he must have unlearned in every thing. Even the expressions of his face, so far as regarded indication of rank, were deficient: its colour and texture seemed vulgar; nay, his speech, and the very hoarse cadences of his voice, had necessarily acquired their present character, since his abandonment of his name and of his station in the world. Once or twice Patrick detected him eyeing askance his own family crest upon articles of plate which lay upon the table.

The supper was drawing to a close. The brothers had spoken but little to each other, though, as they pledged healths

across the table, their looks told much. Roger suddenly asked some questions.

"You spoke of the mother a while ago, Philip;—she died while I was with Hamilton in the North; but you came home from your school in Spain a few days after I left her, did you not?"

"I did, Roger," answered Philip.

"And, by course, you were here when she was called away from us?"

"I was at her bedside, brother."

"In what room of the castle did she die, Philip, dear?

Philip mentioned the chamber by a familiar name.

"And you buried her in the chapel to be sure?" continued Roger. Philip assented.

"If it's not very dangerous for us to do," Roger resumed, after a short pause,—"that is, Philip, if you don't think we might be seen together by any of the servants of your house, I'd be asking you, Phil, *ma-chree*, to take me to that bedside, and then down to the ould chapel."

The brothers had been looking away from each other. Now their eyes suddenly met, and at the same instant filled; and after struggling for a moment with his inward yearnings, Philip bent his head to the table, covered his face with his hands, and wept violently.

When the fit passed away, he arose without a word, opened the door of the apartment, stepped cautiously out, remained absent a short time, returned, took up the lamp from the table, beckoned to Roger, and they withdrew together.

"Poor Roger Walshe!" reflected Patrick, when thus left alone—"that one thought of his dead mother has annihilated all of his character, which is the growth of the time since they parted to this present hour."

When Roger and Philip returned to Patrick, the former said —evidently taking up a subject which had been touched upon between them—

"The only thing, brother, which I am almost sure *she* will forgive me, is the hiding who and what I was as long as I could, after I was forced to return to my own country. But, indeed, from the day that I learned I had been outlawed in Meath, my thoughts only ran upon hiding my existence, while yet our father lived, also."

"It was a noble thought, dear Roger," said Philip; "that so you might continue a name and an estate to your family."

"Tut, no, Philip; give me no extraordinary praise: I only

said to myself—'Since I am a beggar, by my own making, too, if not by my own fault, I will try and save from beggary my brother, my sister, and my name and theirs: since the laws disqualify me from being Baron of Crana, Philip, and his issue after him, or else little Dorcas and hers, shall have the old place, and the old grounds, without legal taint; and thereupon I went to France, countenancing the story of my fall at Hillsborough, even to the face of all my family.'"

"That was an excess of self-devotion, Roger; our father surely, and myself, young as I was, and if we could have met, would have kept your secret for our own sakes, if not for yours."

"There was a chance that the honesty of family love might have betrayed us," answered Roger, "and I guarded against that, even though at the loss of family love for ever, or, at the least, for a long time. And now, Philip, dear, there is but one matter upon which I will try to crave your indulgence of my late unfortunate courses. I have said I was forced to return to Ireland, and it is true. And when I did return, it was not as a man of the hills and woods; a wild, unsocial, outlawed man, with hands against all men, and all men's hands against me. No: I came the master of a little money; a little, honest, honourable money; and I took a farm, far North; stocked it, and laid myself down to work it; and, under a new name, was growing prosperous, in an humble sense, when, by an untoward chance, my hidden, though never-denied, religion, became discovered. Then I encountered unfriendliness, ill-neighbourhood, cold faces, finings, and at last imprisonment, which lost me all farming profits, made me unfriendly, in return, to law, and lawgivers, and law-upholders, and called up, I believe, a certain bold carelessness of mind in which I was born. It was an easy matter to change name again, and as easy to gain power over one of the roving bands of unsettled people who remain since the wars of James and his son-in-law; and as a Rapparee I determined to die, however it might chance, without leaving a blot upon the name of old Crana; and until this last term the thought I had treasured up for my death-pillow, was—'The Walshes have it yet.'—Is little Dorcas in the country?" he asked, after a pause.

"She is, Roger," answered Philip;—"But you were compelled to leave France, you say?"

"Not France," he answered: "I was in Spain, and a sworn and paid subject of Spain, when the necessity for leaving it,—ay, and France, too, where I was too well known,—happened.

I go on, Philip, telling you the very truth; though I must needs end in a fact that, above all the passages of my ill-starred life, I fear will not make you love your brother.

"Upon my arrival in his territories, Louis gave me a commission in his armies, through interest made at St. Germain. Some short time after, I was permitted to change into the service of Spain. There I met a lady of a high family, and we loved each other—at least her high and, belike, fierce spirit, and my hot-blooded fancy would break through all bars to come together. Under my first-feigned name, I could make no pretensions to the approval of her family. We married privately, however, in Madrid—our marriage was discovered. Her friends renounced her, and commenced a persecution against me. They had influence at Court, and I was degraded from my rank in the Spanish armies. Burning with rage, I encountered one of them by chance. We fought a duel, and he fell. Then Spain became too hot for me, and France, alas. I was necessitated to fly from an arrest which would have compassed my destruction; and, now listen, Philip—a few hours before my flight, my wife died, giving birth to a child—a daughter—and I could do no more than take the wretched infant and lay it at the gate of a convent."

"What convent, Roger?" asked Philip, suddenly excited by a matter distinct from the general feeling in which they had met to converse. His brother mentioned the name of the convent, and of its superior. "Powers above!" resumed Philip, crossing himself.

"What ails you, brother?" demanded Roger.

"Your child is in this house," was Philip's answer.

Quick words ensued, in which Roger learned the story of the wretched Louise Danville, and of her coming to Ireland with Dorcas Walshe. It certainly appeared, that in all probability she was the daughter of the Baron of Crana. Still there existed, or at least lay at hand, no positive proof of the fact; and ere she should be spoken with, or even seen, questions were to be weighed, and as Philip Walshe strongly urged, his sister more closely catechised.

"Then little Dorcas, too, is in the house, as well as in the country?" rejoined Roger.

"Not little Dorcas now, Roger," answered Philip; "you have to embrace, for your sister, a lovely woman of good stature. I must seek her, and lead her hither."

Patrick pleaded to be allowed the office of summoning Dorcas; he thought that he could prepare her for what she had to encoun-

ter more coolly, and therefore better, than Philip could. Philip did not object; and Patrick was rising for the purpose, when his misson became futile. Almost simultaneously with terrific shrieks of more than one voice, sounding from about the distance of the entrance through the ballium into the outward court of the castle, Lady Dorcas was heard at the closed and locked door of the library, calling loudly and in agitation upon her brother Philip's name, and knocking for admission to him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

After a moment of embarrassed thought, Philip Walshe went to the door, and asked his sister, without opening it, if she was alone. Dorcas replied that she was, and repeated her supplications for admission. As he turned the key in the lock, he demanded whether she knew the cause of the outcries which all heard. "No," she answered; "but I came to you for an explanation of them, and for your protection too, dear Philip, for I am sorely alarmed, and Louise Danville is not in the castle!"

He opened the door. She was stepping hastily in, when at at the sight of Roger Walshe, she drew back in alarm. Philip whispered a few words to her. She uttered a suppressed scream, and stepped back again, pressing her hands together before her, raising her shoulders, and fixing her eyes on her new-found brother. Roger stood upright, at the other side of the room, his regards also dwelling on Dorcas, his cheeks pale, and a tremour running through his frame. When she did not immediately advance, he bent his head and body low, saluting her. This wretched self-prostration went to Dorcas's heart; she walked forward quickly, and in a sudden fit of tears, took both his hands in hers, and held her cheek to his lips. He, too, wept like a child.

The fearful cries rose higher outside the castle. Philip demanded Patrick's company to the top of the wall over the embattled entrance to the outward court-yard. Roger Walshe said he would accompany them, averring that he was sure the disturbance arose on his account, whatever it was; and that therefore he ought not to allow his brother, and his brother's friend, to inquire into its cause alone. Philip at first demurred,

but finally yielded, as well to Dorcas's solicitations as to Roger's, on condition that the latter should keep himself as much as possible from observation, and take no part in any parley that might go forward.

By narrow steps of stone, they all soon mounted the wall at one side of the gateway, Roger Walshe concealing himself from the notice of those below. The broad avenue to the castle swept from a great distance through the grounds up to the gateway. Green turf spread from its edges to the right and to the left. On this turf, immediately beneath the spectators upon the wall, was an old oak tree, of which the thick foliage cast a shadow over the grass, and at a first glance, many figures appeared in busy action, some within the shadow, some in the moonlight beyond its edge. The former were fastening one rope to Father James's arms, behind his back, and another rope round his neck; and from him, as he struggled with the matchless strength of a madman, arose in part the yells which had startled our friends in the castle. Louise Danville was the principal figure of the group in the moonlight; and her hands were held tight by two men, while she also writhed to get free, and echoed in the extreme of shrillness the cries of the priest. John Gernon stood composedly near her, watching the proceedings under the tree. All of his bold bachelors were armed, and they were five in number.

Neither Patrick nor Philip Walshe recognised Father James; this ignorance, however, could scarce lessen the consternation in which they beheld a being of such wretched appearance about to be strangled before their gate. The situation of Louise Danville farther surprised and alarmed her friends. Lady Dorcas added her own screams to the outcries below; and Philip and Patrick, in a breath, called to Gernon to account for what they saw.

The Captain of the Bachelors' company quietly turned up his head to the wall, and answered; "All in good time: you shall soon learn our business so near your castle, genteels—just as soon as a rebel and outlaw, who will not submit to be led to justice, undergoes the punishment of his obstinacy. Up with you into the tree, Tom, and slip the rope over a branch—all else is tight enough now, and the money our own."

Lady Dorcas turned away from the sight, covering her face with her hands. Her friends were unarmed; there was not a weapon in the castle; to interrupt Gernon by force was therefore impossible; and they could only continue to protest against the act, while the man whom Gernon had addressed

climbed up into the old oak, holding the end of the slackened rope between his teeth.

He disappeared among the thick foliage, his victim still struggling desperately, bound as he was, in the hands of the two other men.

"Quick, Tom," resumed John Gernon; "down with you." A sound of a human voice was heard in the tree, like a groan, interrupted by a catching of the breath, and Tom fell head foremost on the turf, and there lay without motion.

"What's the matter, lad?" questioned Gernon: "jump on your legs! Your can't?—stunned by striking your foolish head against a branch, I reckon, after letting your toe slip.—Up you, James," to one of those who held Louise Danville, "I will help to take care of the lady."

"Do not touch me, villain!" cried Louise, as he seized her wrist. "I have nothing to do with you, nor you with me—I have told you nothing—I will tell you nothing!" She had been silent since the appearance of her friends on the wall to this moment, her head dropped on her breast, and her efforts to get free abandoned.

"Do you hear her, bachelors?" asked Gernon, sneeringly; "she has told us nothing? and now she thinks, in her little fit of repentance, that we won't be her humble servants along the road to the place where she will be made to tell it all over again?"

"From this hour my lips shall never utter a word, though you torture me to the death," said Louise, in her late remorse and indeed, despair.

"And what can the young lady have told you, to warrant your present violence against her, scoundrel?" demanded Philip Walshe.

"Go on with that other business, James, and while it is a-doing I may as well amuse the grandees above on the wall," said Gernon, to his newly-appointed executioner, who accordingly strode towards the tree; then he again spoke to our friends—"She has told me what you won't half like to hear, Philip Walshe."

"Sirrah! how do you address me?" pursued the alarmed and conscious Philip—"here, at my own gate, how do you address me?"

"I crave your pardon," answered Gernon; "I forgot the mister. But, hut, tut, plain words at once. The little lady comes to this gate—no longer yours and that never has been yours—to put me in guard of the Castle of Crana, in the

name of King William and Queen Mary, to whom it is confiscated, and has been many a year, by virtue of the outlawry of your elder brother Roger, in Meath—Roger Walshe, Baron of Crana, and late Sir Randal Oge O'Hagan."

Once more screams of agony burst from Louise.

"And you will hold possession of the castle for one hour after this notice at your peril, Mr. Philip Walshe," added Gernon.—"What's to do there again?" he continued, as, to the surprise of every spectator, the second man who had ascended the tree, while John Gernon was speaking, came crashing down through the boughs, and fell heavily upon his already prostrate comrade—"Can't you try it again, no more than Tom?" He let go Louise Danville's hand, and stood over the person he now addressed—"Can't you speak either?"

"Barely," gasped his faithful bachelor—"I am stabbed in the breast."

"A volley into the tree!" ordered Gernon; and he fired his carabine, while his three remaining men managed to discharge a pistol each, two of them still holding Father James, and one Louise—"And now wait a minute," he said.

He had not to wait half a minute, when two hidden foes, badly wounded, and groaning loudly, fell in their turns at the roots of the oak, having vainly striven to cling to its boughs and branches in their descent: one was a servant of Crana castle, the other a peasant. Both held common table-knives in their hands.

"Any more of ye?" questioned Gernon, climbing up the tree himself, with the reckless and perfect bravery which was the only excellence of his character.

"Try, dearee!"—and—"Yish—an' plenties!"—the voices of John Sharpe and Rory Laherty were heard to exclaim, almost together, in the depths of the oak; the former rapidly added—"Drap yerselves on the lave o' em, my acorns!"—and a reserve of half a dozen servants and peasants jumped down upon the three bachelors, and secured without injuring them. Several new events now happened nearly at the same instant. Roger Walshe, giving no warning of his purpose to his brother, ran down the steps of the wall, and unbarred and unlocked the gate, desperation and rage in his eyes; Miles Pendergast, attended by two riders, came, according to the promise of his letter, up the avenue; a great crashing and struggling took place in the tree, and then, forcing boughs, and even heavy branches with them, Gernon, Sharpe, and Laherty, fastened together, like three of a swarm of bees, tumbled in a lump

on the green turf, and there lay struggling, and kicking, and imprecating in their several idioms and phrases. And it was even while they thus made their appearance, that Louise Danville learned the full operation of the act of ingratitude which she had committed.

She stood free of the man who had held her, stepped out alone and conspicuously before the wall, and spoke up to its top. "Philip Walshe, look—Dorcas Walshe, look—I have repaid all your friendship with treachery, with treachery, which ruins you both—look, look!"—She held her long-treasured little poniard short, its point to her bosom. Her father had come out from the gate and was near to her; he saw her preparations for self-murder, and wrested the weapon from her hand; then, holding her round the waist with his left arm, he looked closely at it in the moonlight, and a great cry escaped him.

It was his own hands which had laid the unhappy Louise at the convent gate. In his hurry and agitation, and in his anxiety to escape out of sight unknown, the small dagger had fallen from his girdle, and become hidden in the folds of the infant's dress. When found by the nuns, who took in the little stranger, the Superior kept it safe until the day of her conversation with Louise, of which Lady Dorcas has spoken; and then she presented it to her, as, most probably, a token by which she might, some time or other, discover her parents.

Louise's mind became seized with the belief that it must have been her father's; nor did she err in this one, at least, of her many vehement fancies.

After a few hasty words together, Roger Walshe and she turned out of view among some thickly-planted trees.

Almost immediately, Philip and Dorcas disappeared from the wall. The next moment brought the astonished and alarmed Miles Pendergast close to the oak-tree, where he saw his former land-steward and game-keeper rolling about with John Gernon, their allied efforts scarce enough to hinder him from overpowering and choking them both with his naked hands. Patrick O'Burke soon joined Pendergast, explained to him in a few words the scene which he witnessed, and then aided him in separating the only remaining combatants. One seized John Sharpe, another Rory Laherty, and Gernon bounced up a liberated man.

Pendergast's quick, just, and cautious mind immediately understood the only course which was now to be adopted. He saw that, although John Gernon was temporarily mastered, for the second time, in the legal discharge of his legal duties, it

would be but braving the vengeance of the whole statute-book absolutely to send him away with a tale of defeat and failure to his principals. He therefore strove to conciliate the determined Mayor of Bull-ring, often hindered, however, by John Sharpe.

"Ay, ye dearee,—Ay, ye mother's own rearing: and ye thought nae ane could form ae ambuscade but your ain sel'; ye thought ye could gae flaunting it in brave swords and carabines, over-an'-hether in the wood, and never meet our ee; yes, ye did, Johnny; yes, pet; and gang up to the vera gate without ae challenge; to be sure; why not;" and thus Sharpe ran on, too much excited to heed, in the first instance, the severe expostulations of his old master. As for Rory Laherty, his immediate care, when he found he must no longer make battle against Gernon, was to run, whooping, to Father James, cut his bonds, and set him free; and, like an unbound wild beast in terror, the raging madman instantly fled out of sight, escaping the immediate fate which had threatened him. He was found dead and crippled up, however, a few days afterward, in the Polh-an-Aiffrin.

But, still aided by Patrick O'Burke, Pendergast at last succeeded in keeping down John Sharpe's bitter boasting and wrathful irony, that he might parley with Gernon. And he guaranteed to the guardian of bachelors,—made confident by a whisper from Patrick, as to the intentions of Philip Walshe,—that the castle of Crana should be peaceably delivered up to King William and Queen Mary, without any farther legal process, provided that all who wished to depart from it were as peaceably permitted to go their ways from its gates. Gernon, seeing himself outnumbered as he stood, and, in fact, calculating nothing so much as the pecuniary reward for his "discovery of an unsound title," assented to the proposed terms of treaty.

Philip Walshe now addressed Mr. Pendergast, issuing through the gateway, followed by his sister, both mounted. "I thank you, sir," he said, "for saving me the trouble of settling this business; I have overheard your parley, and I am ready with Dorcas, here, to ride off from Crana this moment."

"Whither?" asked Pendegast, as he respectfully bowed to Dorcas Walshe, and shook Philip's hand warmly.

"I know not, faith," replied Philip, forcing a laugh—"any—the nearest road to the Irish coast, however, will serve.—The name of Walshe," he continued, in an altered voice, wringing Pendergast's hand—"the name of Walshe, Mr. Pen-

dergast, is dead—and worse than dead—disgraced, in our own country, and we are not going to stay here behind it.—Good b'ye, sir.—O'Burke, good b'ye."

"Tut," said Patrick, vaulting on a horse held by one of the discarded servants of Crana,—"We ride together, don't we?"

"Yes," answered Pendergast, "we do;" and he turned his own roadster to gain Dorcas's side. Hitherto she had not wept at the prospect of loss of rank, country, means of existence; these words, and this action of Pendergast caused her a fit of weeping.

"Where is *he*, O'Burke?" asked Philip.

"Here I am, Philip," answered Roger, coming to his stirrup: he had stood some minutes behind them, and alone, hearing their conversation:—"And *she*—although worlds would not again drag her into your sight—or Lady Dorcas's, is kneeling down in the clump of trees, beyond, praying your pity,—if not your pardon, before we part from ye, for ever—she, my own poor unfortunate child."

"Part from us for ever?" demanded Philip—"surely we all gain the coast together—see—your horses, which I have ordered.

"Thanks, brother, kind thanks," replied Roger; "and with your leave, we will ride a little distance after ye, till danger of pursuit for the present may be thought past; but then, Philip, it is not in our minds, indeed, to live with ye, or near ye, for the future. We know our own part, and will take it."

All remonstrance was lost on Roger. He only shook his head, and repeated his arrangements. "And we are not to *go by the name*," he added, "and for that reason, 'tis odds if ye shall ever be shamed with as much as hearing of us.—So, a good b'ye, brother, stoop the cheek, and let me kiss you."

They exchanged the salutation which he sued for. Then he looked wistfully at his sister. She beckoned him, when he came to her horse's side, let her arms fall on his shoulders, and presented him her lips.

"Brother," she murmured immediately after; "this new part you are so bent on taking alone in the wide world—" and she hesitated.

"Will bring you no farther shame, dear sister, by Him who hears me?" he dropped on his knees, weeping and embracing her feet.

"Well—we forgive the poor, blinded Louise," resumed Dorcas; "and we will kiss her for the last time, too."

"Yes, yes—our brother's daughter," agreed Philip;—"go for her Roger."

Roger did so, but returned to say that her remorse and shame would not permit her to appear before her uncle and aunt, although she humbly offered them her adieus, her thanks, and her contrition.

"Ride, then—and good-night Crana!" said Philip; and he, Dorcas, Patrick, Pendergast, Rory Laherty, John Sharpe, and a band of volunteer servants and former tenants, who elected themselves into a guard against interruption on the nearest road to the coast, turned their horses' heads from the old castle. The last Baron of Crana and his ill-fated daughter followed, as Roger had stipulated, for a little way behind, but the two brothers never again met. All, however, escaped to a foreign country, where Philip soon gained a commission in an army of the enemies of his own, where Pendergast and Patrick purchased their new estate, and lived under the same roof, even after the latter was married—and married to Dorcas Walshe; where John Sharpe, exclaiming against the barbarity of the language, and other peculiarities, had great sway as land-steward; and where Rory Laherty, as game-keeper was tyrannised over by him.

END OF VOL I.

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